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**THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF PLURALISM AND  
COSMOPOLITANISM IN BARROGA'S WALLS AND  
KENNEDY'S THE OHIO STATE MURDERS**

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# THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF PLURALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM IN BARROGA'S WALLS AND KENNEDY'S THE OHIO STATE MURDERS

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## Abstract:

This research aims at discussing the consciousness of philosophies of pluralism and cosmopolitanism in Barroga's *Walls* and Kennedy's *The Ohio State Murders*. It examines the experiences of violence and marginalization that are clearly manifested in these two plays under research as there are incommensurable ethnic positions, non-communicative social and cultural locations in these models of Asian- and African-American dramas. Moreover, it investigates how the American community should be either ethically or organizationally privileged over other forms of sociality as well as the pressing recognition of diversity, which permits the peaceful coexistence of different interests, convictions and lifestyles.

**Keywords:** Consciousness, pluralism, cosmopolitanism, violence, marginalization, diversity, and coexistence.

## ملخص البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى مناقشة فلسفتي التعددية والعالمية في مسرحيتي الجدران لباروجا وجريمة قتل ولاية أوهايو لكينيدي. كما يدرس مظاهر العنف والتهميش التي تتجلى بشكل واضح في المسرحيتين قيد البحث حيث توجد داخل تلك النماذج من الدراما الآسيوية والأفريقية الأمريكية مواقف عرقية لا يمكن الحكم عليها بنفس المعايير، وكذا مواقع اجتماعية وثقافية غير تواصلية. علاوة على ذلك، يقوم هذا البحث بمحاولة استقصاء الكيفية التي يجب أن يتمتع بها المجتمع الأمريكي سواء أخلاقياً أو تنظيمياً على أن ما ط أخرى من المجتمعات، فضلاً عن الاعتراف الضروري والملح بالتنوع الذي يسمح بالتعايش السلمي بين مختلف المصالح والقناعات وأنماط الحياة.

## Introduction:

The world may not be small in its size, but it may as well be when we think of the purposes of international travel and communication as well as perceiving and experiencing other parts and cultures of the world. As a vast number of people go across national borders each year; the increased flows of people, information, and resources across national boundaries have generated interest in both transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. These terms, according to Appadurai, have been used to describe individuals who are participants in the global “ethnoscape” such as tourists, immigrants, refugees, and exiles because their lives span beyond the boundaries of a single nation (297). Transnationalism has been presented as a form of consciousness and identity, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, form of political engagement and a basis to reconsider the meaning of “place”. At the most basic level, what these perspectives have in common is a focus on both multiple ties and interactions, which link people or institutions across the borders of nation states (Vertovec 4).

While transnationalism involves crossing nation state borders in some ways, cosmopolitanism disengages from the idea

of the nation state, focusing on the development of “citizens of the world” rather than citizens of a particular nation state (Beck 18). As Vertovec and Cohen claim, cosmopolitanism has been characterized as a condition or philosophy, and also as a set of attitudes, practices and competencies (2). It has a moral component of respect for humanity, a political component focusing on international human rights discourse, and a cultural component involving pluralization of society and appreciation for other cultures (Delanty 29). In addition, cosmopolitanism, according to Calhoun, is often presented simply as global citizenship where it frequently refers to ‘the class consciousness of frequent travellers and hybrid citizens’ (872-873).

As some theorists indicate, cosmopolitanism means that society exists through networks rather than territorial spaces such as nation-states, and for others it indicates that mobility is the defining characteristic of people, technologies, commodities and cultures (Urry 7). The existence of rooted cosmopolitans and deterritorialized nationalism, according to Tsuda, speaks to the legitimacy of the nation-state compared to post-national groups and an inability to fully imagine supranational communities (193). In other

words, people who engage in activities crossing national borders may still identify with the nation-state because they do not see the transnational or global communities as legitimate communities to which they can belong; thus, pluralism may constitute one of the ways to attain peaceful coexistence among different cultures and community reconciliation.

In order to foreground the multiple factors influencing the outcomes of cultural encounters such as material context, social status, gender, politics and legislation, this research compares several discourses of cultural contact that suggest new directions for the examination of dialogue across culture. It starts from the assumption that the theoretical discourses customarily employed for analyzing the literature of migration like postcolonialism, hybridity, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism intersect at certain points but differ in their orientation. Certainly, any group of immigrants coming from both Asia and Africa to America suffers changes in its original culture. However, it also provokes a change in the mold of the culture receiving them. They always bring with them when transmigrating to the nations of America something of their own culture, eating habits, folk melodies, musical taste, language, customs, superstitions, ideas and temperament.

Since its emergence as a nation, America has been tasting the culture of victimhood. The genocide of Native Americans, the forced settlement and slavery of African Americans, and the discrimination against minority groups demonstrate the existence of, and conflicts between victims and victimizers. In the Asian American case, the government and society have committed legal and commonsensical discrimination against the ethnic Other with the help of racism and the culture of victimhood, which date back to the oppression of Chinese workers in the nineteenth century and continue to the present. The culture of victimhood is not

about the atrocities and genocides that only one person, clan, community, or nation have undergone, but also about the power relationship that one of these has with another, depending on their position within the web of political struggles. Hence, today's victim can be tomorrow's victimizer, as the changing dynamic of desire, power and political stance demonstrates.

For the Asian American community, such drama of victimhood finds its stage without emblematic rhetoric. This means there is no dominant word such as Slavery or Genocide that depicts Asian American's trauma and oppression. However, what we can see is that the consistent claim of victimhood by which ethnic groups in both Asian American and African American communities have profited from their various experiences, the flow of emotion striving for melancholy and the anger among community members. Because Asian Americans do not have a label for their victimization, as other racial groups do, their victimhood needs an incisive tone to express communal suffering as they raise their political voice in American society.

Theater develops an organic motivation for orchestrating social urgency through their re-presentation. Among various approaches to victimhood in everyday performance and drama, socio-historical conditioning of dramatic and theatrical narratives becomes this research's primary target and voice, using psychological and philosophical methodology. This research, therefore, aims at examining the narrative of victimhood common to Jeannie Barroga's *Walls* as one of the dramatic and cultural performances introduced by Asian American playwrights, seeking a wide range of contexts—psychological, cultural, and literary—for violence and abuse in comparison to Kennedy's *The Ohio State Murders*, which represents one of the African American cases.

This research sheds light on the value and index of victimhood that are in turn manifested by the rhetoric of victimhood, which generates a debate on how to assume victim status as such. It also investigates the attempts to identify both Asian- and African-American as victims of the American nation-state that do not interpret a community solely in terms of emotional loss and suffering but rather discover narratives of victimization ideologically charged in this community. The research focuses on the concrete realities and specific contexts of victimhood in American drama to the extent that the distance and difference among victims are generatively related. In addition, it shows how pluralism and cosmopolitanism concepts manifested in these two works of drama, whilst at the same time sinking deeply into underlying questions concerning the pains shared and marginalization experiences.

### **Barroga's *Walls***

Jeannie Barroga is a Filipino American citizen, and she was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1949. She obtained a B.A. in Fine Arts and after her graduation, she moved to California specifically San Francisco Bay area. After the death of her father, Barroga commenced her career as a playwright in 1979. She sought to explore not only her Filipino heritage but also a broad range of cultural, political, racial and ethnic themes in her literary works. Barroga wrote approximately sixty works of drama most of them are unpublished. She is also the most produced Filipina-American playwright who has plays performed across the globe. During the nineties of the past century, she has been teaching playwriting in colleges and theater groups. The accomplishments of Barroga have placed her on grants panels and garnered her numerous awards. She writes with passion, perseverance, and blend of stylistic innovations. Her literary works are an ardent quest into self, the Filipino

American experience, and American national identity. They embrace the personal and the public, individual lives and public history, and spheres personal, cultural, and political.

The exploration of the complexity of politics, race, and ethnicity in America unfolds more deeply in Barroga's *Walls*, which is a drama inspired by Jan Scrugg and Joel Swerdlow's book *To Heal a Nation*. It is a drama reflecting multicultural America where she creates racially diverse characters—five Asian Americans, three African Americans, and six Caucasians—in representative roles as patriotic veteran, army nurse, protester, and others who were wounded or victimized. The rhetoric of community and its extension to the nation serves to question the ideologies in American nationalism, particularly when such ideologies are organized against the nation's constituents such as the Asian American community at a debilitating time.

*Walls* (1989) is a work of drama about American invasions and wars abroad. It describes individual community rhetoric while operating under a fictitious national entity and takes the external space of confrontation with enemies in South East Asia into the internal space of conflicts bound with incongruent economic, racial, and ethnic arguments. It is embedded with war ideology on behalf of America or the American disposition of power in politics and economy in Asia; U.S. militarism and imperialism take advantage of nationalism to fight wars which should be fought as just wars in Vietnam and the Philippines.

The representations of these wars are not merely devoted to the construction of historical events when the participants are unintentionally torn between the antagonisms of enemy allies and homeland security. There is a temporal distance in this drama as Barroga's *Walls* was written around fifteen years after the end of the Vietnam War. A spatial difference also exists in this drama, which is the space

between Asia and America overshadowed by injuries and war memories. These temporal and spatial differences serve to bring out the nation's unrepaired war wounds in a much delayed aftermath.

In fact, the United States refuses to acknowledge its role in the Vietnam War or atrocities in the Philippines and this reaffirms the disparate experiences and assumptions of responsibility between individual human suffering and communal sacrifice as citizens. This drama, thus, reconstructs battles turning one's contemplation away from the immediate outcome of the war, whether it leads to defeat or recession, and brings in contested issues regarding communities both in and outside the national territory. Nationalism, in a retroactive direction, substantiates the making and unmaking of a nation-state through different political agents, community discourse, and cultural translations of the state-power.

The relocation of past events to weave a history for the national community is the continued and reversed fiction of the nation-state, which decides its terrains and components depending on strategic, situational political motives. America as a "pluralist society" seems to initially offer multiple choices to her citizens, but the pluralism is limited and certain ideas dominate a society fantasizing about pluralism, with multiculturalism as its branch, where there is an argument about just or unjust wars but not about the boycotting of war itself.

Considering this generally ideological trend of American politics and culture, the process of "natural" selection most remarkably is carried out in times of crisis such as war, when the selected ideas and mechanisms of power initiate an obedient, passive citizenry among racially, economically and politically disadvantaged social groups. The overarching frame of nationalism and the fragile endurance of relationships among communities within

and beyond national boundaries tend to be called into question on American homeland and on American ideology.

*Walls* establishes the Vietnamese War Memorial as the focus of cultural, generational, political, and ethnic debates and returns the still unrealized memorialization of the Vietnam War to the consciousness of ordinary Americans. The national amnesia of a war without victory and without defeat infuriates the war veterans and their families remain enmeshed in sorrow and grief. The protestors adopt a humanistic attitude; they are enraged by the government's war claims, favoring peace and justice instead. Set in 1981, *Walls* devises the founding of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Fund and the design contest for the memorial in 1981 as its main plot, bringing national memory and imagination on historical events in South Asia to pass.

When the first place in the design contest was awarded to Maya Lin - a 21-year-old architecture student with Chinese ancestry, there were furious reactions from fund-raising veterans, who did not believe that she can aptly embody "die for the country", "killing for the country", or an "experiential history". Her abstract design of black granite walls without any flag or statue, an unusual form of war memorial, further shames veterans who want a more visible sign of their sacrifice abroad as Tom Carhart concluded:

Can there be any doubt that [they] chose a design that reflects only *their* interpretation of the war they saw here at home? What about the soldiers who survived? What about their memories? [. . .] Please extend to us the grace and the dignity to choose our own Memorial that will fairly represent *our* Vietnam

experience to posterity. (*qtd. in Marling 13*)

In Barroga's *Walls*, the Chinese American identity of Maya draws the attention of the TV audience away from the controversies surrounding the memorial and renews national memories of the war and trauma in Asia. The selection of an Asian American architect's design for the commemoration of an American war in Asia heightens and extends the controversy to another level. Seemingly, politics have been highlighted over aesthetics, even though the selection was made by the Commission of Fine Arts from 1,421 anonymously submitted designs. To the public, an American of Asian ancestry embodying national sorrow and shame in Asia is imagistically ambiguous. Asian Americans may represent America as her citizens, but the nation-state still has problems with cultural, ethnic, and political affirmations whether for or against a new national history. A dialogue in this drama between Rich, a Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Fund representative, and Vi, a Chinese American news reporter covering Maya's story, hints at the general framing of the event by the American public as follows:

RICH: The news is you've been playing both sides of the fence, that's the news. Weaving your little web of intrigue—

VI: Intrigue?

RICH: —I'm surprised you didn't throw in what you did in the war. Did you do anything? Even protest?

VI: I was busy being an A-student.

RICH: Oh great. That's why you're so perfect now, right?

VI: Stop it. Stop saying my hair, "as usual," is perfect. That I am perfect. You don't mean it, anyway.

RICH: Oh, but I do. Anyone middle-of-the-road—

VI: Yes, that's right. I didn't make waves or make any radical political statements. Know why? Because I'm from a family that says success above all: be brighter, do better.

And I did, I achieved. And if you don't think that was a struggle, then you try it.

RICH: Try what? Pretending I'm not what I am? Putting on a face in front of millions of viewers and ignoring the fact that I look like the ones this war was fought against? An Asian face.

VI: Stop it!

RICH: You think people don't notice that? Can't you see the irony in all this?

VI: I'm sick and tired of—

RICH: You're the story, Vi. Maya knows that. And you'd admit it, you do, too. Both of you. You're part of what this memorial is supposed to represent. Can't you see that? What do you got to say about that? What words will express what now will never be carved on that wall, huh? How do you feel about that, or do you feel? Is the facade too thick now? (*Walls 250–251*)

Due to what is stated above, it is evident that Vi represents a model minority, who strives to climb the ladder to success and she is too apolitical to be aware of the influence on her Asian American identity of the intense political debate. Rich's sensing of the interior mechanism of racial bias and discrimination swings Vi's lens away from an Asian American success story toward the walls dividing the national community. China, the forgotten homeland of Vi and Maya, is transformed back and forth not only into Vietnam but also into Asia, regardless of its specific national identity and ethnic background. The indistinguishable physicality of the Asian body registers the presence of the traumatic past, an unhealed wound on the national consciousness.

After a series of discussions and controversies over Maya's design, she turned to politics to prove her artistic intention as well as getting legal advice to protect her original design. At the peak of the heated arguments, veterans insist on incorporating a flag and a monument of three soldiers into the memorial and she considered this action as a violation of her

artistic freedom. The memorial project uncovers the intense presence of war rhetoric because the healing process requires some digging at scars of the past. However, despite persistent beliefs on storied deaths of comrades, the materialized and externalized patriotism ignores the aesthetic intention as Maya asserts, “the requirement was that the memorial avoid a political statement and begin a healing process” (*Walls* 220). This objective was the principal purpose of the contest, given the politically controversial history of the Vietnam War, nonetheless the memory of the deceased is carried to the monument and the rhetoric of military activity keeps claiming that it is there for ‘us’.

Each of these living memories reveals the uneven and inconsistent layers through which veterans and other citizens have coped with the war in Asia. In one part of this drama, the Asian American veteran Dan experiences complicated citizenship claims because Dan can be “mistaken for the enemy”. As observed by Stu, an Asian American who worked in the hospitals in war-time Hawaii, his kind of Americans got operated on last because they look Vietnamese. Asian Americans cannot escape from their forgotten homeland or from Asian sameness as long as their ethnic/racial denomination is not seriously embraced by their nation. Their Asian visages evidence those who have not been accepted as a member of the nation-state and they continue to be denied as such. Class difference also holds separate the ‘voluntary’ engagement of one race from another, making unnatural selection for the nation-state; this is a predominant fact, which appears in the dialogue between Morris, an African American, former nurse and Sarah, an African American, paraplegic: MORRIS: (*referring to book*) Look here: over two million sent. Two hundred and ninety thousand in '69 alone. Twenty-five thousand in just one week. Seventy-six percent were, what they call “lower class.”

You know what that means—mostly black. Breaks down to two black men to every white.

SARAH: A numbers man.

MORRIS: Hell, everybody knew that—everybody black. That’s all we talked about. Can’t give us jobs or a place on a bus, but they sure can find a spot for us on the front line. (*Walls* 254)

War, whether at home or abroad, may be intermingled to give a wide range of individual reactions to accommodate the national tragedy, and this acknowledges the proliferation of war rhetoric into the ordinary lives of Americans. Yet, differentiation on the degree of engagement, the sole perception of war in terms of a physical presence in a foxhole, stands alone to disapprove of domestic comrades as allies as well as ordinary citizens. As Morris, a war veteran observes, the domestic class war entails an impoverished social status, and economic and class problems affect the warriors on the front line, casting doubt on the willed, voluntary participation in the war for the nation. Even if he sees the backstage of the war, Morris does not want to acknowledge civil participation in the war; specifically, he does not consider Sarah’s hospital orderly service performed behind the battle lines. He will not look for particular names on the wall unless they are food for gunpowder in the front line, nor does he see the wounds family members carry.

This double denial of mourning the dead, which exists so powerfully in ordinary American lives, is embodied through veterans’ insistence on building “their” kind of memorial along with Maya’s wall. They want the statue of three soldiers designed by Frederick Hart portraying a clean-cut suburban kid in the middle, a black at his left, and on the right, the third figure that was originally suggestive of southern, countrified good looks, but it acquires “ethnic features in a sense” in the end and looks like a Latino (*qtd. in* Marling 16). All

those G.I.s (or soldiers of the United States Army), namely white, black, and Hispanic, represent the war veterans' idealized views, in terms of race and sex, of those groups who served in a national crisis. Other groups, whether they opposed the war or supported their families and friends in the battle field, are not appropriate for militant nationalism, for the loss and pain that speak in the aftermath of war.

Maya inadvertently gestures to this blank spot of the national dirge, which is not simply permitted by war rhetoric but must be included in the nation's mourning in order to build a new national community. Her Asian American identity, like that of Dan and Stu, is easily identifiable with what would not be representative of the nationalist ideal in a time of war. Her "not being there" receives as much attention from patriotic war veterans as her artistic inventiveness does for the healing of past wounds.

However, in a memorial built of two black walls the injuries and wounds of war become a mode of reflective operation. At the end, the walls were built separately from the veterans' statues. The names of soldiers who died or went missing are engraved in chronological order on the 10-foot high walls. The memorial is set into the ground, connecting the soldiers to the underworld. In Maya's theory, the memorial's black granite is meant to be 'reflected on' as she confirms to Vi during the announcement of the winning design:

VI: Maya, is there anything you'd like to say about your design? Anything at all?

MAYA: Yes, I just want to say . . . I just want to say this memorial is meant to be reflected on. People should be mesmerized. They should face it, approach it, and perceive the names before they read them. Touch them and realize in the black reflection they've touched something in themselves.

They shouldn't just see a bunch of names or even a political statement.

Even the process of killing the grass in order to build this is important. I meant to show what it's like to die. (*Walls* 221)

As a result, "all the victims are in one place on one day, the last day of their lives", as Maya argues (*Walls* 227). This truth articulates the formal structure of war and embodies the grand death of the living in gigantic "empty" space. The walls, therefore, stand for one temporal yet grandiose death: a sublime finale for the nation. Many deaths from different races, cities, and provinces are joined as one "national" memory, surpassing the ethical and political judgment of war for a while.

The wall, with its dark mirrored face, relocates the living to somewhere among the battles in Asia and America. It also argues on behalf of the material and psychological conflicts between militant and civil society and carries both formal and casual recollections of war. Jeannie Barroga presents the divided responses of the masses to the memorial design by portraying the past and present and starting and ending the memorial as a transitory history that Maya intended to emphasize. A woman's searching eyes stress the presence or absence of the dislocation of history elicited by the wall where she says:

WOMAN: Look at all the people, John . . . John? . . . Hold me.

Our son's name. Nineteen years old and war takes him away from us. Takes his youth, his ideals, his life. I wanted a son who would visit us with grandchildren, who would grow up as we grow up and live into our old age.

Memories, John. I wanted memories with my son. But this is what I have, what we have. A name to look at in the black stone. And your face. Your face as his would have been, looking back at me. His and your face . . . John? John? (*Walls* 226)

The scars of the war still deny veterans the ability to "be there" at the moment of the memorial's construction, and it is the memory of those that remain, not the bronze

statue or a flag, that constitute a major part of the public and private recollections.

To comfort the nation, the license is restrictive at first, but during the walls' construction, Maya's design begins to have a therapeutic effect on those who were there and on those who remained here. Julie, a war protestor, begins to interact with strong-headed vets like Terry who does a marathon of flag-bearing around the walls. Sarah finds solace in Morris for her avoidance of duties on the front line, which is the probable reason why she helps visiting vets at the memorial. Through the walls, people become mesmerized by the black mirror, finding themselves in it, reaching out to touch the names, looking for individuals gone and left.

Vi confesses that issues of racism and division still exist, but people "fight a war, one of prejudice and indifference" (*Walls* 259). Yet, Barroga, as Lee proposes, constructs a vision of America as a social body rendering these differences permeable in the face of a common set of wounds (214). In the process of making and unmaking a national community, walls stand as a "gash in the earth" (*qtd. in* Marling 23) and a loss and pain to the living and the dead. The memorial's attention to individuals is evidenced by the names touched, remembered, and felt by mourners. The reflective walls stand for sustained and passionate meditations on the eligibility of community and nation and for the recognition of nationalism's present absence in communal consciousness.

According to Griswold notes, in the case of Vietnam War, there was not a declaration of war as the official start or celebration or parades for veterans as the official end (707). The controversies in civil society relating to the Vietnam conflict have served to postpone the recognition of the service given by veterans and have created a form of national amnesia where people hope the past will disappear. The disturbing production and exchange of war memories,

mirrored in substance on Maya's walls, suggest an invitation to a national history and nationalism commissioned by multiple communal identities. The list of names and paralleling moments of memorializing have endless equivalencies in history which entail the engagement of the living with those closed in the past. Of course, in that amnesia, the Asian American "otherness" is never forgotten, introverting to domestic differentiation, or vice versa. The sacrifice of the Asian American through racial discrimination is not only needed for the maintenance of the state's racial hierarchy but also for the healing of the nation's wound abroad. The Asian Americanness takes extra suffering not merely as marginalized groups in the society but as citizens of national community, their legal status being nullified.

Eventually, we can discover that the disapproval of Asian identity has taken place not only at the very moment of the nation's disembodiment but also in the suturing phase of the nation's wounds. This is evident in Barroga's *Walls*, which arouses a disquieted reflection on the nation and nationalism. The victimization of white and other ethnic Americans during the wars raises a call for the healing of the nation, namely, for the understanding and respect of racial or ethnic differences. In response, the national community acknowledges that the incompatible suffering of each ethnic group, including mainstream Americans, cannot be denied. Nonetheless, the rhetoric of suffering, in the name of national tragedy, homogenizes victims in much the same way that the American victimization mechanism has produced Asian sameness. It excludes Asian Americans from the nation-state and marginalizes the issues of racial difference and Otherness, which dismiss Asian identity as being too exotic and savage for the nation's ethnic and cultural demography.

Barroga's *Walls* examines the possibilities of channeling violence into sources of conversation, connection, and

reconciliation as well as exploring those of turning moments of collapse, catastrophe and crisis into occasions for healing, hope and change. It shows that violence, rather than always producing more violence, actually contains the seeds that can undo themselves. Moreover, mass violence of war can evoke a cosmopolitan compassion for the enormous human loss that transcends social schisms and generates a cosmopolitan solidarity based on a shared understanding of and respect for the sufferings of others. In deciding who gets remembered and what gets memorialized, Barroga's negative cosmopolitanism demonstrates an acute sensitivity to race and its intersection with gender shaping individuals' experiences of violence: firstly, by referring to the particular war stories of racialized and gendered minorities, she challenges the racist and sexist memorializations of the Vietnam War in the mainstream media. Secondly, by incorporating racialized people and women in her vision of negative cosmopolitanism, Barroga reformulates Eurocentric and male-centered construction of post-war solidarity.

Due to Barroga's anticipation, theater is a meeting ground where characters of various backgrounds play out different and even conflicting views, interests and values. She carves out a space for a range of Vietnam War memories that have been systematically erased in the mainstream society because their gendered and racially minoritized voices are not in line with the nationalistic ideology of heroic white masculinity. This play shows that without an exploration of the communal dimension of the experiences of violence, people may lack a shared ground to establish an overarching concern for humanity, and that without an understanding of the multiplicity of the experiences of violence, the shared ground may become a form of hegemonic universalism that risks suppressing marginalized experiences. Consequently, Barroga's memorialization of the war and

dramatization of cosmopolitan solidarity not only explore possibilities of finding common ground across racial lines but also gender and class boundaries.

### **Kennedy's *The Ohio State Murders***

Adrienne Kennedy is recognized as a major American playwright who broke free from the dominant conventions of realism and naturalism and gave dimension to American and African American drama. The complexity of Kennedy's works of drama was evident from the early beginning. The multiplicity of contexts to which her work belongs is evident in *Intersecting Boundaries*, which contains essays that evoke divergent theatrical, dramatic and literary contexts.

The discussions on trauma and loss as well as belonging and citizenship are dominant issues in *The Ohio State Murders*, since it delivers the most powerful representation of those aspects of a disability aesthetic. It also demonstrates the ways in which Kennedy envisions not only the black female embodiment but also the experiences of violence towards colored or hybrid citizens as a way for refusing pluralism. This drama involves the closest construction of narrative progression and the telling of a complete "story". Moreover, it is impossible to ignore the hysterical impulses and homicidal tendencies present in Adrienne Kennedy's corpus of work.

'Diversity' is usually viewed as a matter of description where the distinct kinds of people divided by religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political allegiance, or whatever brute empirical distinction they or others draw between them. On the other hand, 'pluralism' is a moral term, and it is a way to handle diversity by turning separations into a positive way for different people to connect with one another. Now that diversity becomes a reality, then maintaining pluralism is an importunate achievement. It is a way for social democracies to maintain their liberal commitments in the fact of

global economic ties, mass migration, and demographic change. It is not the only possible response to such pressures, but it has the merit of balancing social unity with the right of individuals to ‘be themselves’—whatever that vague phrase means in our increasingly multicultural world.

Actually, the United States provides a useful case study, not only because it is so religiously and ethnically diverse but also because it has wrestled since its beginning with how to forge unity out of differences. Sometimes it has succeeded but sometimes else it has not. The pattern of its successes and failures can tell us something about how diversity and pluralism really work.

In *The Ohio State Murders*, Suzanne Alexander, an established playwright, is invited to The Ohio State University to give a talk about the violent imagery in her work. In the library stacks, Suzanne rehearses her talk as she envisions concrete imagery of specific places on the campus and describes the traumatic events that occurred during her stay where she says, “I was asked to talk about the violent imagery in my work; bloodied heads, severed limbs, dead father, dead Nazis, dying Jesus” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 152). Kennedy presents Suzanne in this drama as two characters: a young Suzanne of the past and a present-day Suzanne. Both young Suzanne and present Suzanne share the stage — present Suzanne relays the information and past Suzanne relives it.

Throughout this drama, pluralism is totally refused where past Suzanne is teased by the white girls in her dorm, discriminated against by the school administrators who refuse to allow her to join English department. She also has a sexual encounter with her young, white professor; such relation resulted in her expulsion from school and the birth of twin girls. The play turns violent when the professor kidnaps both children, drowns one and stabs the other and eventually kills himself. It encompasses Suzanne’s persistence with

discovering the identity of her children’s murderer while coping with racial, sexual and emotional trauma. Therefore, it is obvious that the harm of pregnancy is still a constant theme of Kennedy’s drama.

Kennedy explores not only issues of anti-pluralism but also the complex and fluid boundaries of citizenship as well as belonging through Suzanne’s concise use of place to expose the tense, racial climate in Midwestern Ohio in the 1950s. Although the play itself physically takes place in the stacks of the library, as Suzanne rehearses her talk, the stage directions indicates that “*sections of the stacks become places on campus during the play*” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 152). The protagonist, Suzanne, creates a vivid spatial map of the Ohio State campus. For example, she points out that the Oval was behind the green, the tennis complex was beyond the golf hut, and the stadium was located to the right of the Olitangy River, where all of them were connected by zigzagged streets. Present Suzanne admits that the geography of the campus and the surrounding areas (downtown Columbus, the Deschler Wallach, the train station) made her anxious and visiting Ohio State now as Suzanne declares, “when I visited Ohio State last year it struck me as a series of disparate dark landscapes just as it had in 1949, the autumn of my freshman year” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 152).

This anxiety is fueled by the way the boundaries between the geographical landscapes become markers along racial lines, indicating which bodies belong to that space and which bodies are out place. The geographical landscape is arranged to identify white spaces and black spaces and to regulate the bodies that inhabit those spaces. The ways in which Suzanne describes the housing on campus illuminates the highly racialized spatiality of Ohio State. For instance, Suzanne explains that in her dorm across from Old Union there were six hundred girls and only twelve of them were

black. In this context, she says, “We occupied six places, rooming together two in a room”; she adds, “The other dorms, Canfield and Neil, each also housed a few black girls” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 154). Black women barely made up two percent of the female population in Suzanne’s dorm, and they reflected the overall sea of whiteness on Ohio State’s campus.

Furthermore, Suzanne states that after the first year in the dorm, white women went to live on Sorority Row right off High Street, which “seemed a city in itself: the cluster of streets with the columned mansions sitting on top of the lawn appeared like a citadel” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 159), and meanwhile, the black sororities did not have houses and instead “we met in rooms on campus or in private homes. So we remained in the dorm” Suzanne added (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 159). Suzanne’s descriptions of the unjust and racialized spaces underscore the marginalization of black women on Ohio State’s campus.

The geographical landscape similarly reinforces the racial hierarchy of white superiority and black inferiority as all the white spaces are larger and nicer, and the black spaces are small, decrepit and physically located on the margins. Suzanne tells, “I remember how I had grown to dread the blocks bound by the stadium, the High Street, the vast, modern, ugly buildings behind the Oval, the dark old Union that was abandoned by all except the Negro students” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 168). While the places themselves, like sorority row, the dormitories, and the old Union building, are fixed to adhere to the rigid racial environment embedded in the American social structure of the 1950s, Suzanne’s positioning in and out of those places demonstrates that the places remain fixed but the bodies are in constant movement.

The rigidity of the geographical boundaries makes it difficult for black people to navigate these spaces though, and this difficulty can lead to a constant state of angst. Suzanne explains that black bodies had to learn which spaces were safe spaces and which spaces could potentially lead to harm. For example, Suzanne recalls that she never walked on the blocks on sorority row—an all-white space—because “there was no reason for Negroes to walk in those blocks” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 159). Likewise, there were other spaces deemed off-limits for African American students: “Very few Negroes walked on High Street above the university. It wasn’t that you were not allowed but you were discouraged from doing so” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 154). The process of this boundary work functions to exclude and control certain bodies.

When we take into our consideration how narratives of racial exclusion like the racial spatiality of Ohio State’s campus are linked to narratives of ableism, the perspective of Dis/ability Critical Race Studies is critical to be applied here. Scholars of these Studies seek not only to expose the normalizing racism and ableism processes as they occur in society but also to theorize about the ways in which “race, racism, dis/ability and ableism are built into the interactions, procedures, discourses, and institutions of education, which affect students of color with dis/abilities qualitatively differently than White students with dis/abilities” (Connor 14). The school, thus, is one of the most “fiercely contested sites” where the boundary work of racism and ableism intersect (Collins 189). As Collins claims, teachers and administrators are often the ones who control the boundaries of normal while locating the abnormal as a way to deny access to racialized and disabled bodies (195). The conflation of narratives of ability and race, in *The Ohio State Murders*, is demonstrated

through Suzanne's experience both outside and inside the classroom.

In one of her required classes during her freshman year, Suzanne takes an English course with Professor Robert Hampshire; after a discussion of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, she wrote an essay on the novel. When Suzanne turned in the essay, the professor asked Suzanne to come to his office and interrogated her about the crafting of such an astonishing essay. He begged to know whether she used any reference books to write the essay or she read Hardy before. Hampshire admitted that the paper "conveys a profound feeling for the material" and "the language of the paper seems an extension of Hardy's own language" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 156-157), but he could not believe in her speech. Hampshire's skepticism of Suzanne's work is foregrounded by underlying assumptions about both Suzanne's race and ability. The professor believes that Suzanne cannot possess the ability either to analyze or write such an impressive manner as she is a black woman. Hampshire's reading of Suzanne's ability is mired by racist conceptions of black people as inherently incompetent. In this instance, the construction of race and ability occur in tandem.

Suzanne's abilities are defined by race and her race defines her ability when she tried to be a student at English department during her sophomore year however racial injustice stymied her educational potential. Suzanne (Present) tells us how there were no black students in the English department where she says, "It was thought that we were not able to master the program" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 154). Instead, the English department secretary informs Suzanne that she would instead be required to complete a trial course to determine if she had the potential to become an English major. She completes the course and the instructor, Professor Hodgson, assigns her C's on all her papers.

Later, the secretary informs Suzanne that she could take no further English courses. Suzanne requests a conference with the professor but is denied. Having no other choice, she becomes an elementary education major, although she reveals she hates the new courses. The department refused to allow Suzanne to major in English; such refusal emphasizes the boundary protection inherent in maintaining rigid racial spacing. It is also indicative of the punishment black bodies receive when they try to transgress those boundaries.

Both Professor Hodgson and the secretary are complicit in controlling the boundaries that deny Suzanne access to a major of her choice. She is hence out of place. Suzanne understands the role that race plays in perceptions of ability and vice versa as she juxtaposes her prior schooling in Cleveland, where she attended schools with a mixture of immigrant and blacks, to her experience at Ohio State as she declares, "The school I had attended in Cleveland were an even mixture of immigrant and black. You were judged on grades. But here race was foremost" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 154). The manner in which Hampshire, Hodgson, and the secretary label Suzanne's body based on race highlights how racism and ableism not only define what is normal but "work to mark, exclude, and extinguish what is different or abnormal" (Collins 189). Suzanne's educational ability is deemed abnormal and, as such, demands maintenance.

In *The Ohio State Murders*, the white administrators and teachers control not only the ability to maintain the boundaries of race and educational ability inside the classroom but also the boundaries in the dorm life. In this regard, Suzanne tells how she was kicked out of the University after it was discovered that she was pregnant when saying, "I remained in the dorm until March when I was expelled. The head of the dorm, Miss Dawson, read my diaries to the dormitory committee and decided I was

unsuitable. I did not fit into campus life. And after the baby was born I would not be allowed to return to campus” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 161).

In fact, ‘unsuitable’ and ‘fit’ are two words that underscore the violent racial and unfairly practices rooted in the study of eugenics used for determining which body has the right to hold citizenship and which body is considered “defective” or “unfit” for full citizenship rights. Suzanne’s pregnant body makes her already racialized body hypervisible. As such pregnant body becomes a symbol of shame and her actions breach the perceived values of the University, there is an excessive necessity to dispose her body. Although the administrators are unable to expel Suzanne from the University simply because of the educational threat she poses to the white students, by declaring a pregnant Suzanne unfit for Ohio State, they can therefore justify their denial of her educational citizenship.

The process of belonging and citizenship as maintained by the white presence at Ohio State is precipitated by constant controlling of black bodies. Suzanne conveys that even in the dorm where black bodies occupied only six places out of the entire dorm, the white administrators had unlimited access to their already marginalized spaces. She indicates that the only way the administration knew about her pregnancy was “Miss D. had gone into my room and found my poems, Judy Garland records, my essay on loneliness and race at Ohio State and the maps I had made likening my stay here to that of Tess’s life at the Vale of Blackmoor” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 161).

Miss Dawson summons Suzanne to her office. Neither does she give her a chance to explain her situation nor does she offer an apology for breaking her right to privacy. Miss Dawson, however, condemns and punishes Suzanne. She also violates Suzanne and thereby treats her as a second-

class citizen on campus, as one who has no right to privacy. This invasion of space was a common practice for black students around the entire campus. Despite the fact that the black students were relegated to the margins of the University, Suzanne declares that even in those limited spaces black bodies were under incessant surveillance and control. In this regard, Suzanne says, “. . . the dark old Union that was abandoned by all except the Negro students. And too, we were spied upon by the headmistress. She made no secret of the fact that she examined our belongings. “That’s our general practice,” she said” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 168). For the white teachers like Hodgson and administrators like the secretary and the headmistress, controlling black bodies in larger white spaces is necessary and vital in order to purport racial superiority on Ohio State’s campus.

Suzanne emphasizes the traumatic effects of the incessant controlling of black bodies, violent negotiations of belonging and citizenship, and both blatant and subtle events of racial inequality she endures while a student at Ohio State. *The Ohio State Murders* explores the traumatic effects of racism, ableism and sexism; this was evident through Suzanne’s experience with racial violence from other students at the University, through her calamitous relationship with Robert Hampshire, and finally through the tragic loss of her twins’s. The interactions between Suzanne and white students at Ohio State, particularly the white female ones, emphasize how black women socially navigated an environment with such rigid racial and social boundaries.

The protagonist, Suzanne, goes on to describe how she and her roommate, Iris Ann remained isolated and ostracized by white women on campus. Suzanne tells us her interactions with Patricia as she called her “Bunny” Manley, an “overweight, dark-haired” girl and her friends who incessantly tease them. She clarifies how they were never invited to any of the white girl’s

parties and how this group refused to speak to the black girls. In case they saw them coming down the corridor, the white girls would giggle and close their door as well as accusing Iris Ann and Suzanne of stealing Bunny's watch from the lavatory. Of her mistreatment at the hands of Bunny and her gang, Suzanne reveals, "I hated them. Their way of laughing when they saw us coming into the lounge, then refusal to speak was a powerful language. It had devastated me" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 167).

These racial, cruel practices have long-term tangible influences on Suzanne where she admits, "I felt such danger from them" (168); briefly, she thought that Bunny and her gang could be responsible for the twins' murder as she adds, "Had they somehow sought out me and my babies? Of course I told no one this. But I knew whites had killed Negroes, although I had not witnessed it. Thoughts of secret white groups murdering singed the edge of the mind" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 168). Even though she tells no one of her suspicions, she remembers her father's sermons on lynchings and past murders of black people at the hands of secret white groups. Suzanne's knowledge of the history of racial violence against black people coupled with her lived experience of the harsh realities of navigating the racist and sexist environment at Ohio State leads Suzanne to have both psychological and physical traumas.

As a black student on the campus of Ohio State University, Suzanne faces obstacles such as rejection, isolation, and ultimately scare. She is so consumed with the threat of the past, ongoing and possible future racial violence where this feeling causes her corporeal pain, and she says, "I was often so tense that I wound the plastic pink curlers in my hair so tightly that my head bled. When I went to the university health center the white intern tried to examine my head and at the same time not touch my scalp or hair" (Kennedy and

Werner Sollors 168), and he concluded that Suzanne was merely putting curlers in her hair too tightly. Suzanne's experience at the clinic highlights the disconnection between black women's experiences in a highly divided racial environment from that of a white male's experience in the same environment. Suzanne's scalp bleeding constitutes a physical manifestation of the psychological trauma she endures due to racist and sexist violence. On the other hand, the intern's whiteness gives the privilege to ignore the possible underlying psychological concerns and instead opt to treat only the physical evidence. For the intern, the cure is simple and he is unable to see Suzanne's psychic distress. For Suzanne instead, her bleeding scalp represents a more complex matrix of embodiment.

Not only does the relationship with fellow students cause Suzanne physical and psychological distress but also her relationship with her young, white professor further aggravates this trauma. It is fruitful to frame Suzanne's relationship with Hampshire in relation to Tess, the fictional character Suzanne is introduced to in her first class with Hampshire. Suzanne shows what Hampshire indicates as an "unusual empathy" for Tess and although on the surface it might seem like Suzanne has nothing in common with the fictional English white female eighteenth century protagonist of Hardy's novel, Kennedy makes some connections between them. Actually, the two protagonists, Suzanne and Tess, are constrained by the social conventions of their time. Hampshire reveals this reality in one of his lectures when he says, "Inherent in almost all Hardy's characters are those natural instincts which become destructive because social convention suppresses them, attempting to make the human spirit conform to the 'letter'" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 155).

Tess and Suzanne, therefore, are both ostracized for losing their virginity

before marriage. Although it should be noted that Tess was more than likely raped by Alec, the community still chastised her. There is no indication that Suzanne was raped, but after her father, a pious minister, finds out that she is pregnant he is shocked, and sends her to live with her Aunt Louise. Tess and Suzanne both have children who die—Tess's boy from sickness and Suzanne's from murder. Both the two protagonists are proactive agents. Tess seeks justice from Alec for causing her to lose Angel's love, while Suzanne seeks justice for the murder of her children.

Whereas throughout Hardy's novel Suzanne empathizes with Tess's plight, Suzanne's own positioning as a black woman in 1950s America complicates an exact parallel between the two heroines. While Tess is cast more as a "fallen woman", a term used during the Victorian period to describe a woman who has lost her innocence, Suzanne's racialized body is considered a more harmful role where Hampshire perceived her as a "Jezebel". During Christmas break of her freshman year, Suzanne deceived her parents when telling them that she spent the last days of the break with Iris Ann, but she actually spent those two days with Hampshire, which results in her pregnancy. Two months later she reveals to Hampshire that she is pregnant, to which he responds, "That's not possible. We were only together twice. You surely must have other relationships. It's not possible" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 161). Hampshire's response reveals the underlying racist and sexist stereotypes about black women that have been prevalent since the Africanist presence on United States soil. The jezebel stereotype rested on the idea that black women during slavery had an insatiable craving for sex and actively tempted their white masters.

As the myth goes, because of black women's lascivious and immoral ways, they then could not be raped by their masters, which white masters often used as an excuse

to have sex with enslaved women without scare of moral reprisal. In this encounter, Hampshire purports the sexual myth of Suzanne as jezebel in two ways. First, he denies her credibility by saying that it was not possible that Suzanne is pregnant with his child. This denial is built on the jezebel myth that black women's inability to remain chaste leads to dishonesty. Secondly, he does not ask, but rather assumes that Suzanne has had partners other than himself. Hampshire advocates the idea that as a black woman, Suzanne has an uncontrollable lust for sex and she is inherently promiscuous. Hampshire's rejection of Suzanne ascertains his vigorous mission to set a boundary between him and Suzanne. He rejects Suzanne not only because of the jezebel myth but also because of the social constraints regarding miscegenation. The twins' birth represents a physical manifestation of his transgression. In case Hampshire is the father of the twins, this scandal will not only jeopardize his social standing but also lead to his social death. Consequently, Hampshire kills the twins as a way of disposing of his guilt and shame, getting rid of any "evidence" of his relationship with Suzanne.

Suzanne is not immune to the threat of consequences arising out of the community's fear of miscegenation either. She reveals to no one other than her Aunt Louise that Hampshire was the father of her children. Relationships between whites and blacks were socially prohibited and many characters in the play, including the police, the college, Hampshire, and to an extent Aunt Louise and Suzanne, help preserve the borders between the races by assuaging the possible scandal. The police are not very thorough in their investigation and although there was no evidence, they attempt to pin the first murder on Thurman, a recently released inmate who often walked the campus posing as a student. Aunt Louise is offended that the police are more interested in merely closing the case than actually

finding the perpetrator as she says, “You don’t understand. My niece is a sweet girl. A very sweet girl. All you white people are alike. You think because we’re Negroes that my niece is mixed up in something shady. My niece knows no Thurman” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 167). Aunt Louise asserts the distrust deep-rooted in the relationships between white police officers and black civilians.

When Hampshire is found dead along with Carol the second twin, tales of disability are evoked to cover up the scandal. One story by Mrs. Tyler, a black neighbor where Suzanne and her children had been staying after she returned to Columbus and where Hampshire committed the murder-suicide, was that Hampshire had gone into a fit of insanity and he was quite mad when forced to enter Carol’s room. Both Hampshire’s father and Suzanne’s father pressure the newspapers to bury the tragedy as Suzanne’s father is convinced that “it was best for me” as Suzanne said (173). Instead of exposing Hampshire as a murderer of his own children, the University sought to disguise the story before it comes out in the newspapers. Hence, Suzanne explains that “There were stories that a white professor had wandered into the Negro section of Columbus and was killed” (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 173). The details of the heinous crime are disguised under a vague tale potentially depicting Hampshire as an innocent victim, since it was told that the professor merely “wandered” into the black neighborhood and “was killed”.

Suzanne is really traumatized by the physical, psychological and emotional stress of the environmental factors of racism inside and outside the campus of Ohio State University. However, she deals with these practices of injustice through the support from her friends and family. Unlike Val, Suzanne’s black male friend and her parents are ashamed of her deeds and they wish to disregard the situation in which Suzanne

consoles herself by Aunt Louise, friend Iris Ann, husband David and his sister Alice. She illustrates how Iris Ann supports her during the early months of her pregnancy by accompanying her to the health center.

Although Alice did not meet Suzanne prior to the death of both twins, after hearing through David about Cathi’s drowning, Alice crochets two bibs for Carol and sends butter cookies to Suzanne and David. Both Iris Ann and Alice show Suzanne empathy during her most trying times. Likewise, David is supportive of Suzanne from the first time he meets her at Mrs. Tyler’s home, where Suzanne has been living. David does not judge Suzanne nor ask for explanations about her being a young, single, black mother; in this regard, she indicates:

Then I met David. He would come by and say hello to Mrs. Tyler. When he discovered Carol was my child he made every effort to talk to me. He sensed my sorrow. When he found out that Cathi had been tragically killed he started to come by every evening after he left the law library. He asked no questions but only treated me with such great tenderness. (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 168)

After Carol’s death, David insists that Suzanne must stay at his parents’ house, where, at Alice’s suggestion, Suzanne remains in Alice’s room for months. Being at his parents’ house gives Suzanne a physical place to retreat where she can care for herself. Not only does Suzanne take comfort in her husband, her sister-in-law, and her friends in order to cope with the remnants of trauma and loss, she finds love and support in her Aunt Louise who becomes a surrogate mother or an “other mother” to Suzanne when her parents shun her.

Patricia Hill Collins argues that other mothers can be blood-related or non-blood related black women who either provide temporary or long-term arrangements for black children in the community, often when the blood mother cannot or will not provide care for their offspring (248). Aunt Louise constitutes an othermother (or a mother who provides care for children that are not biologically their own) to Suzanne; after Suzanne's family neglected her, she not only takes her in but also scolds her brother for kicking Suzanne out of the house. As Aunt Louise is older, single, and has no kids; she is considered a source of incessant encouragement for Suzanne. During the time of Hampshire's ignorance of Suzanne, Aunt Louise solaces and stimulates her to "forget about that white man" (165). Moreover, Aunt Louise even reaches into her own savings to put Suzanne back in school where she says, "And forget about your parents. I don't know how my brother can ignore his own daughter. But, Sue, I have a little money saved. I'm going to help you go back to school" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 165). Aunt Louise, therefore, assumes the position of mother, friend, guardian, counselor and confidant to Suzanne.

As it is stated above, Aunt Louise is the only person who believes in Suzanne speech and knows the identity of the father of Suzanne's twins. Knowing what scandal and danger would occur in case the father's identity became public knowledge, Aunt Louise vows that if she is ever asked who the father is, she will have one of her former black music students to admit that he is the father instead. Since moving in the extremely hostile racial boundaries of the Midwest constitutes a difficulty when Suzanne faces it lonely, moving in these spaces becomes a little more bearable for her with the support of some black community members like Aunt Louise, Iris Ann, Alice and David.

At the end of this play, with the encouragement of her support system, Suzanne offers an alternative narrative to histories of trauma. Some incidents such as pregnancy, racial injustice, expulsion and murder can all be traumatic events leading those who experience them into a permanent state of dejection however Suzanne recognizes the loss and pain without completely surrendering to it. She both attends to her own self-care in the safe zones with David, Aunt Louise and at David's parents' house as well as fighting the injustices she faces at Ohio State. Although Aunt Louise and Val insist that Suzanne must not return to Columbus after what happened to Cathi, Suzanne is determined to find the murderer of her child and returns to Ohio State. In the last lines of this play, Suzanne comes to terms with the death of her children, as she concludes, "Before today I've never been able to speak publicly of my dead daughters. Good-bye, Carol and Cathi. Good-bye... And that is the main source of the violent imagery in my work. Thank you" (Kennedy and Werner Sollors 173).

Due to ingrained racial and sexual oppression, Kennedy's subjects remain fragmented that exist as bitterly opposed selves, observing their own existence but unable to act, incapacitated by circumstances of birth. In *The Ohio State Murders*, the selves are torn less violently, with less polarization; still, memory takes its toll on Suzanne Alexander and fragments her into two distinct selves—one is older and the other is young. The older Suzanne, ultimately, responds to her consecutive traumas by returning once more to the space in which she is marginalized, threatened and ostracized. The speech allows her the space to address the trauma in ironically the same space that sought to silence her voice.

As a result, pluralism emerged in response to particular challenges in the development of liberal democracies. It also promotes an interpersonal solution to

diversity while diverting attention away from diversity's social, cultural and economic causes. Pluralism is an ideological construct because it encourages us to ignore the fact that our diversity is rooted in a specific situation. It encourages people to think that mere dialogue will bridge differences. Diversity ceases to be a problem when relieving these social, cultural and economic causes. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism is tolerant of diverse cultural outlooks and practices, valuing human differences rather than similarities, cultural pluralism rather than convergence, and de-emphasizing territorial ties and attachments.

In conclusion, we can discover that experiences of violence and marginalization are clearly manifested in Baroga's *Walls* and Kennedy's *The Ohio State Murders* as there are incommensurable ethnic positions, non-communicative social and cultural locations in these models of American drama. The cosmopolitan features, which were truly appeared in these two works of drama, have a moral component of respect for humanity, a political component that focuses on international human rights discourse, and a cultural component involving pluralization of society and appreciation for other cultures. The idea of America as home subsumes culturally and emotionally distinctive ethnic groups within its borders, in the modes of formal citizenship, was broadly questioned. Moreover, this research creates the space for those newly arrived immigrants where America is reduced and reproduced through its concepts of white nationalism, pluralism and cosmopolitanism. The Europeanized Old America does not doubt its 'whiteness', nor does the New America with its humanist promise of assimilation in reconstructing the personal and social identity of its members. It also proves that through the homogenizing effect of naturalization and liberal humanism, a peculiar history of ethnic community is erased for multicultural

America and a modern American community evolves.

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