THE LIMITS OF TOLERANCE: HOSPITABLE ARGUMENT, INTERPRETATION, AND EAST–WEST STUDIES

Akiyoshi Suzuki [*]

Abstract: In a world increasingly shaped by globalism and the normative valorization of diversity, social fragmentation and xenophobia have nonetheless intensified. One possible source of this paradox may lie in what can be described as a Copernican turn in the reading of texts, inaugurated by earlier postmodern thought. It follows, therefore, that the humanities must rearticulate the practice of textual interpretation to help address these contemporary pathologies. As one such trajectory, this study proposes a renewed engagement with the discourse of "hospitality" and situates East–West Studies, together with its world-literary elaborations, as a concrete mode of textual reading oriented toward ethical and political openness.

I. Introduction

In a world increasingly shaped by globalism and the normative valorization of diversity, social fragmentation and xenophobia have nonetheless intensified. In this regard, it is necessary to recall Walter Benn Michaels's warning that a conception of diversity premised on the proscription of mutual negation logically contains within itself the reinforcement of ethnocentrism and of a stratified capitalist order (Michaels, 2010, 80–81, 180–81). Hannah Arendt likewise observes that the preservation of plurality through the rejection of forced homogenization constitutes a characteristic strategy of what she terms "empire" (as distinct from "imperialism") (Arendt, 1976, p. 125). If globalism is thus understood as an Americanist "empire" that foregrounds diversity while simultaneously encouraging the internalization of neoliberal values, then, at a historical moment in which the United States appears to be relinquishing its hegemonic "throne," the utopian pursuit of diversity within global capitalism, in conjunction with struggles over that throne, can be interpreted as engendering a worldwide dystopia of exclusion and xenophobia.

According to Michaels, the reversal of the valorization of diversity into xenophobia occurs when pluralist understandings that prohibit disagreement are coupled with indifference toward, or discrimination against, those rendered vulnerable by capitalism—most notably the poor. Yet this configuration also constitutes the other face of the "tolerance" and multiculturalism that Francis Fukuyama envisioned as the basis for an "ideal" form of democracy in the post–Cold War world (Fukuyama, 1992, pp. 211–30). More broadly, both this ideal and its perilous counterpart are prepared by a Copernican turn in postmodern modes of textual reading and, by extension, in the understanding of texts and the world. The conjunction of multiculturalism and this interpretive turn institutes a prohibition on mutual negation grounded in cultural identity, thereby producing a persistent condition of communicative failure. It was Michaels who articulated this diagnosis, and on this basis, he calls for a renewed commitment to "argument" as a means of addressing the impasse. Yet in a social order in which negation is already proscribed, argument risks functioning less as a practice of mutual understanding than as a catalyst for antagonism.

Against this background, this study proposes a shift from a "tolerant" multiculturalism and a merely "tolerant" practice of debate toward a discourse of "hospitality." Tolerance, etymologically and conceptually, is cognate with endurance: it denotes an engagement with the other in which the self remains unchanged. Hospitality, by contrast, entails an encounter in which both parties are transformed through their relation to one another. In hermeneutic terms, hospitality is thus synonymous with understanding itself. Finally, this essay argues—through

[*] Dr. AKIYOSHI SUZUKI, Professor of American literature and comparative literature, Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nagasaki University, Nagasaki, Japan. Email: suzu-a@nagasaki-u.ac.jp.

concrete examples—that such a discourse of hospitality finds its most tangible methodological realization in East–West Studies and in its development within the framework of world literature, thereby bringing the present inquiry to a close.

II. The Valorization of Diversity and the Dynamics of Imperialism

Contemporary globalism constitutes a dominant constellation of ideologies whose defining feature, as globalization—the embodied form of globalism itself—makes visible and as Kōjin Karatani observes, lies in its departure from both the nation-state, which forcibly homogenizes its members, and imperialism conceived as the outward expansion of the nation-state, which imposes homogeneity upon the populations of other polities; instead, contemporary globalism ostensibly permits the inhabitants of each region to retain their distinctive ethnicities, religions, languages, and even political systems and economic practices (Karatani, 2010, pp. 337–38). Karatani designates this formation an "empire," drawing on Hannah Arendt's conceptual distinction between "imperialism" and "empire," wherein imperialism denotes the expansive logic of the nation-state grounded in relations of subjugation and tribute, whereas an empire refers to a broad-based political formation that refrains from intervening in the internal affairs of conquered peoples or nations (Arendt, 1976, p. 125). In this sense, the empire approximates what Benedict Anderson famously terms an "imagined community," one premised on reciprocal relations and capable, at least imaginatively, of transcending the class antagonisms and structural contradictions generated by capitalism (Karatani, 2010, p. 42). From this perspective, as Manfred B. Steger (2008) argues, the consolidation of globalism as a dominant ideological framework and the intensification of globalization processes contribute to the formation of a "global imaginary"—that is, a shared horizon of values, institutions, laws, and symbols through which social totality is apprehended—while classical imperialism, by contrast, enforces homogenization at the expense of the nation as an imagined community (Karatani, 2010, p. 421).

Even so, with the U.S. dollar remaining hegemonic as the currency underpinning global capitalism, and with the majority of platforms that mediate access to critical infrastructural services and markets—while coupling big data with digital services—being dominated by the so-called American GAFA(M), the contemporary global economy increasingly assumes an imperial configuration. In this respect, James Peck's (2006) characterization remains persuasive, insofar as contemporary globalization, while foregrounding diversity, simultaneously enables the global circulation and internalization of capitalist—especially neoliberal—values and a competitive ethos oriented toward individual success and happiness, thereby exemplifying what Peck terms "American-centric state globalism using capitalism as a key to its global reach, integrating everything that it can into such an undertaking" (352). This logic is further reinforced by the fact that contemporary capitalism commodifies difference itself through appeals such as "buy this to distinguish yourself from others" or "this is a special, limited-edition product," so that respect for difference is not merely compatible with, but in fact operates as, a central motor of global capitalist accumulation grounded in the proliferation of atomized, American-style identities.

Neoliberalism, in the first instance, may be understood as a policy orientation that minimizes governmental intervention while privileging market rationality and individual freedom; under such conditions, subjects are expected to secure survival and happiness through self-reliance and the assumption of personal responsibility. Within this framework, the normative emphasis on freedom, difference, and the valorization of diversity is readily subsumed into an economic calculus in which, so long as overt coercion is absent, competition is attributed to individual agency, thereby enabling states and corporations to pursue global competition without assuming structural accountability. The cumulative effect of this process is a further intensification of the atomization of individual identity and a deepened celebration of diversity, a configuration that sets the stage for the persistence of

exclusionary and xenophobic tendencies even within societies that formally espouse pluralism.

III. Discrimination and Xenophobia Generated by the Postmodern Mediation of Diversity

The valorization of diversity is, in itself, normatively compelling insofar as it has contributed to the emergence of social formations in which identities are no longer overtly suppressed. Yet the very absence of identity-based repression functions within neoliberal societies as a necessary precondition for the demand that individuals assume responsibility for their own success or failure. In this sense, the celebration of diversity does not primarily cultivate bonds of human solidarity; rather, within an American-imperial configuration, it mobilizes both a desire for personal advantage that contributes to the expansion of the system itself and a competitive antagonism toward others, even as it performs an outward posture of mutual recognition. Under conditions in which identity is formally unconstrained, success is attributed entirely to individual effort and responsibility, and it is precisely this attribution that renders the poor susceptible to moralization and discrimination, as their social position is recoded as the outcome of personal failure rather than structural inequality.

This dynamic, however, does not originate solely in contemporary neoliberal globalization. It is prepared by an earlier epistemic shift in the understanding of meaning, interpretation, and difference—one that predates both the atomization of identity and the global diffusion of neoliberalism. This constellation can be read as the concrete realization of a warning long articulated by Walter Benn Michaels: namely, that contemporary celebrations of diversity have come to align with postmodernist approaches to textual interpretation that emerged prior to these socioeconomic transformations.

Michaels contests the claim that the meaning of a literary text is wholly determined by the reader and that, consequently, there is no need to attend to the voice of the text itself. He situates this position within the influence of postmodern theories of difference—most notably the "death of the author" and strands of reader-response theory—tracing their intellectual lineage to modern French thought, and more precisely to what he describes as the unexpected development and subsequent reorientation of Jacques Derrida's work. According to Michaels, modes of reading grounded in Derrida's general theory of language have, contrary to their original critical intent, culminated in a form of identitarianism that models the subject on a borderline conception of personality and thereby privileges the reader's positionality over the practice of interpretation.

In elaborating his own essay "Against Theory," Michaels, invoking Francis Fukuyama's search for a model of democracy grounded in diversity and tolerance, formulates his position in the following terms:

> If the project of the end of history is to imagine a world of differences without disagreements, the "Against Theory" project was to explain disagreement—what the author intended mattered because what the author intended was what interpreters disagreed about. This was what was meant by denying that intentionalism had any methodological value—it didn't help you get at the truth about what a text meant, it just explained why you could think that there was some truth about what a text meant. Of course, there have been literary theories committed to denying the possibility of true (or false) interpretations of texts—indeed, I have been arguing that every theory must be committed to making true and false interpretations impossible and thus to eliminating interpretation itself, and that the end of history is just another name for the end of interpretation. (Michaels, 2004, pp. 80–81).

Michaels's argument may be summarized as follows. If the meaning of a text cannot be determined in any definitive manner, then any reading becomes equally valid; in such a framework, the text itself is deprived of determinate meaning, and each reader's experience is elevated to the status of truth. Truths, accordingly, are no longer evaluated in terms of

correctness or falsity, but are instead reclassified as mere differences. The attempt to recover authorial intention, or to posit a singular meaning latent within the work, is dismissed as methodologically vacuous, and all readings are to be accepted as inviolable expressions of the reader's own perspective. Michaels designates this mode of engagement not as "interpretation" but as "experience."

So long as a text can be read in any way according to the reader's standpoint, the act of reading is reconfigured as a process of reliving the narrative rather than interpreting it, such that each reader produces a distinct "truth" through identification rather than through critical engagement. Respect for this reliving of the story as difference thus entails not respect for what the author says, but respect for what each reader—and each figure within the text—comes to represent as a marker of belonging. In this sense, identity-as-difference becomes the primary object of recognition.

This logic, moreover, extends beyond the domain of literary texts. As Hans-Georg Gadamer maintains, hermeneutical experience is fundamentally linguistic, and our very experience of the world is constituted through language; accordingly, the understanding of a text is not a specialized technique but an instantiation of the general structure of understanding operative in the world (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 401–402). If the understanding of texts and the understanding of the world (or being) thus belong to the same linguistic horizon, it follows—pace Michaels—that the reception of narratives in social and political life is likewise reconfigured: the task of confronting the other face-to-face in order to understand what is being said is displaced by an imperative to recognize and respect differences of belonging and identity. Under such conditions, individuals who assume different identities are understood to be speaking about incommensurable things, and identity-as-difference is accorded greater normative weight than the content of any shared narrative. Critique or negation of identity is proscribed, while recognition is reduced to an exchange of mutual non-interference.

The result is a paradoxical communicative impasse, in which dialogue gives way to parallel monologues— "this is our culture, that is yours; let us respect each other, but never contest each other"—and mutual understanding is foreclosed in advance. Communication, in this configuration, is privileged only insofar as it takes the form of reliving the other's story rather than engaging with it critically. To read a story, therefore, becomes to relive another's memory or experience—that is, to relive history itself—without subjecting it to interpretive judgment.

In this sense, the valorization of diversity first produces a structural failure of communication itself. When recognition is organized primarily around the respect for identity as difference, interaction is displaced from a shared space of contestation into parallel regimes of mutual non-interference. Within such a communicative order, a second and no less consequential effect emerges: certain subjects, most notably the poor, are rendered socially invisible. As identity-based repression is formally avoided, social stability and life chances are increasingly recoded as the exclusive products of individual effort and responsibility, while political institutions—particularly under neoliberal rationality—withdraw from the task of guaranteeing material security. Poverty, in this framework, is abstracted from the contingencies of corporate collapse, economic cycles, and the vicissitudes of life, and is instead reinterpreted as the outcome of personal failure, thereby legitimizing indifference in the name of self-responsibilization.

Even where the poor are "understood" or "respected" as bearers of identity, such recognition remains insufficient, for their condition is not primarily the result of identity-based oppression but of their structural location within capitalist relations of production and distribution. What is required, therefore, is not merely recognition but material redistribution; without the transfer of resources, respect alone cannot function as a mode of rescue. It is precisely this displacement of class by identity that Walter Benn Michaels seeks to diagnose when he argues that postmodern attention to racial, cultural, and gender difference has systematically marginalized class difference, since inequality defined by "more or less

money" resists elevation to the status of a subject position demanding recognition. Writers who model "oppression" in terms of marginalization, Michaels contends, struggle to conceptualize economic inequality because the problem of poverty does not map onto the logic of minority status or deviation from a normative identity. As the poor are victimized by capitalism rather than by oppressive definitions of the subject, they tend to fall outside the purview of a politics committed to identity-based recognition (Michaels, 2004, pp. 180–81).

Under conditions in which the voices of the poor fail to register within a regime of self-responsibility, collective action becomes the only remaining modality of articulation. This dynamic is observable in contemporary political mobilizations within the United States and among Generation Z in various regions of the Global South, including South Asia, where economic precarity is increasingly translated into demands for recognition, protection, and, in some cases, exclusion. At the same time, regions and nation-states, confronted with perceived threats to their modes of life, mobilize against those designated as external or internal others. Within what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) conceptualize as a global structure of "empire"—an invisible, deterritorialized form of sovereignty in the contemporary world, which has been subject to the critique that their "empire" merely mirrors the dynamics of the world market insofar as globalism is grounded in neoliberal power relations—American power is widely understood to be waning and, in a symbolic sense, to be relinquishing its hegemonic position. Yet even as this occurs, the economic and governmental architectures institutionalized by the United States continue to structure the global field. Consequently, both the United States and its geopolitical competitors engage in renewed struggles for hegemony, articulated through projects of self-affirmation that are frequently coupled with the proscription of negation or critical interrogation of national and civilizational identity.

It is against this background that Michaels proposes, as a response to the pathologies of diversity, a shift from the imperative of mutual non-denial toward the practice of "argument"—that is, the reconstitution of a shared space in which claims can be contested rather than merely recognized. Similarly, strands of the social Left have advanced the concept of "solidarity" as a counter-principle to the fragmentation produced by identity-based politics. Yet the theoretical and practical question remains unresolved: by what concrete mechanisms can argument be institutionalized and solidarity enacted across differences rendered incommensurable by the very regimes of recognition designed to respect them?

IV. Tolerance and Xenophobia, Hospitality and Mutual Understanding

With respect to the foregoing questions, Michaels does not offer a fully specified solution. He confines himself to the claim that one ought to engage in "argument" in order to generate disagreement. This injunction, however, leaves open a fundamental concern: without a clearer account of how argument is to be conducted, does it not risk producing mere antagonism rather than productive contestation? What, then, would constitute a form of argument that is not reducible to hostility?

To approach this problem, it is instructive to revisit Michaels's critique of diversity. In identifying what he terms the "trouble with diversity," namely the persistent failure of mutual communication, Michaels invokes Francis Fukuyama's ideal of democracy as grounded in diversity and tolerance. If so, it is precisely here that one might locate a clue as to the form of argument capable of responding to the problematic conditions generated by the valorization of diversity.

Tolerance, etymologically and conceptually, is cognate with endurance or forbearance. In this sense, the critique directed at Fukuyama's democratic ideal may be understood as a critique of a model of "diversity-with-forbearance." To endure and accept a plurality of others who are different from oneself does not, in itself, amount to a genuine respect for diversity. On the contrary, precisely because such endurance is experienced as burdensome, the emphasis tends to shift away from the affirmation of one another toward the mere prohibition of mutual negation. In this displacement, non-interference comes to be substituted for respect,

and the avoidance of engagement is recoded as a form of democratic virtue. It is this configuration of democracy that Michaels mobilizes as an object of critique in diagnosing the chronic failure of mutual communication.

From Derrida's perspective, the conceptual opposite of tolerance is hospitality. Michaels's appeal to "argument" may likewise be understood as implicitly aligned with this counter-concept of hospitality. In his reflections on hospitality, Jacques Derrida draws a fundamental distinction between tolerance and hospitality, thereby exposing the latent power relations embedded in the former. Tolerance, Derrida argues, is not a neutral or egalitarian gesture; rather, it presupposes a position of sovereignty from which one grants or withholds acceptance. To tolerate is to "allow" the other to remain within a space that ultimately belongs to the host, thereby reinscribing an asymmetrical relation of authority and conditional inclusion (Derrida, 2001, pp. 14–17).

By contrast, Derrida conceptualizes hospitality (*hospitalité*) as an ethical openness to the other that, in its pure or unconditional form, suspends the logic of mastery, ownership, and prior qualification. Unconditional hospitality demands that the host receive the other not as a guest who must satisfy pre-established norms, identities, or legal conditions, but as an absolute other whose arrival cannot be anticipated or regulated (Derrida, 2000, pp. 25–29).

If tolerance is understood as a practice that reinscribes asymmetrical relations of authority and conditional inclusion, then a society that purports to "respect diversity" on this basis remains, in effect, a form of what Arendt would describe as an "imperial" social order. Although such a society professes hostility to homogenization, it simultaneously harbors a latent drive toward it. Homogenization is forestalled only insofar as subjects remain mutually indifferent, refraining from substantive engagement with one another. Once the limits of forbearance are exceeded, demands for relations of mastery and subordination, accompanied by renewed calls for homogenization, inevitably emerge, together with countervailing forms of resistance. It is in this sense that the proliferation of ethnocentrism and xenophobia within societies ostensibly committed to diversity can be understood. For this reason, the call to engage in "argument" as a means of generating disagreement cannot be answered without hesitation, insofar as argument, under such conditions, appears liable to intensify antagonism rather than overcome it.

It is precisely here that the discourse of hospitality, understood as an unconditionally open relation, assumes its critical significance. Yet what, concretely, would constitute an argument grounded in hospitality? In this regard, it is instructive to consider the account of hospitality proposed by the Japanese philosopher Kōichirō Kokubun in his engagement with the problem of diversity and social division. Reading the texts of Pierre Klossowski through the principle of hospitality, Kokubun (2021) draws a sharp contrast between "tolerance" (*tolérance*), which in its original sense denotes the maintenance of the self while admitting the other, and "hospitality," which entails a transformation of both host and guest, such that the distinction between master and guest becomes indeterminate (Kokubun, 2021, p. 6).

Hospitality, on this account, signifies an encounter in which the reception of the other brings about a transformation not only of the one who is received but also of the one who receives. Tolerance, by contrast, is defined precisely by the absence of change: it denotes the acceptance of the other while the self remains intact. This logic is already inscribed in the etymology of tolerance as *tolérance*, that is, "to endure." To endure the presence of the other is to refrain from touching the other, and thus to ensure that neither party is transformed. Hospitality, by contrast, entails a relation in which, through the very act of reception, the self is altered.

If hospitality is thus understood as a mode of contact that involves the mutual transformation of self and other, it can be redescribed, in hermeneutic terms, as a form of mutual understanding. Heidegger famously maintains that human beings encounter others through a "fore-structure" of understanding; yet to understand the other is not merely to confirm one's own fore-structure, but to allow it to be partially or even wholly destabilized and reconfigured into a new one (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 191-93). To "change oneself," which is

the condition of hospitality, is therefore equivalent to undergoing a transformation of one's fore-structure of understanding.

From this perspective, an argument grounded in hospitality is one in which participants articulate divergent positions in such a way that their respective fore-structures are exposed to disruption and revision. It is precisely through this process that mutual communication becomes possible, and that the conditions sustaining social division, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia may be challenged. In this sense, the practice of hospitality-oriented argument can be understood as the concrete realization of what Michaels calls for under the name of "argument," not as a catalyst of antagonism, but as a transformative encounter oriented toward mutual understanding.

V. Toward a Hospitable Mode of Debate: "Lushan" Understanding and East–West Studies

What, then, would constitute a concrete method for such "argument"? There are several possible approaches, but one particularly instructive model is what Zhang Longxi—an influential scholar of East–West Studies and world-literary reading—describes as a "Lushan" mode of understanding (Zhang, 2014, pp. 71–85).

Zhang takes as his point of departure "Written on the Wall of the Temple of West Forest Temple," a Chinese brief poem on Mount Lu (Lushan) by Su Shi, one of the greatest poets in the Chinese tradition, and argues that a more adequate form of understanding emerges only through the conjunction of both the insider's and the outsider's perspectives, in a manner reminiscent of Edward Said's distinction between internal and external viewpoints. The poem laments that one who dwells within Mount Lu cannot grasp its true form, whereas one who stands outside can perceive the mountain in its totality. Yet, of course, the observer outside the mountain cannot apprehend the concrete realities of life within it, which remain confined to the domain of imagination. To understand Mount Lu properly, therefore, requires a cooperative mode of interpretation that aligns the vision of those inside with that of those outside. The outsider perceives the whole, while the insider apprehends the mountain's lived interiority. It is precisely through their collaborative engagement and argument that their respective fore-structures of understanding are disrupted, thereby enabling the emergence of a more adequate, though never final, form of knowledge. Importantly, this process does not efface the internal reality; rather, it preserves diversity even as it produces a transformed and expanded understanding. In this sense, the respect for diversity and the pursuit of more accurate understanding demand, at a minimum, a form of dialogical engagement among at least two or more interlocutors that is not merely tolerant but hospitable—that is, a form of argument capable of generating genuine understanding.

Nevertheless, a persistent view holds that literature born within a particular historical and cultural formation can be neither understood by those outside that formation nor read without distortion, but only misread or subjected to coercive interpretation. For example, it is sometimes argued that the literature of Ireland—Europe's only modern colony—should be understood not through the lenses of twentieth-century "human crisis" or international modernism, but exclusively through the specific history and culture of colonial Ireland. Such a position is not without its merits, and it is often claimed that only those situated "inside" Irish culture are properly equipped to undertake such readings, whereas those "outside" can only misread and therefore ought to refrain from interpretation altogether.

Yet this stance amounts to a doctrine of infinite incommensurability, one that condemns communication to perpetual failure and entrenches division. To read and to seek understanding does not require abstaining from engagement on the grounds of possible misreading; rather, it requires asking those who inhabit the "inside" whether a given reading is indeed a misreading, or, more broadly, entering into open discussion with others so that one's own fore-structures of understanding may be destabilized and revised in a process of reciprocal illumination.

If such engagement is refused, then even the autobiographical discourse articulated in what is sometimes called "homeless literature"—statements such as "I am suffering," "I have no money," "I need help"—would, by the same logic, be deemed inaccessible to all those who are not themselves homeless, and thus unworthy of interpretation or response. This would be tantamount to treating every appeal for assistance as a form of deception. Such a posture constitutes, in effect, a form of humanistic discrimination against those who struggle to survive. The humanities, rather than adopting such a stance, must begin by trusting both the voice of the other and its own capacity for understanding, by asking questions of the other, and by entering into sustained argument and dialogue with a plurality of interlocutors.

If this mode of argument is extended beyond local and cultural contexts to a global scale, it becomes possible to envision a world that preserves diversity while counteracting social division, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia. This is precisely the methodological orientation of East–West Studies, and of its application within the framework of world literature: an approach grounded in the mutual illumination of internal and external perspectives, in which each region's self-understanding is brought into dialogue with the viewpoints of those beyond it.

One illustrative example may be drawn from the work of Kakuzō Okakura. In *The Book of Tea* (1906), Okakura asserts that true beauty is discovered by those who complete the incomplete within their own minds. On the basis of the idea that spatial emptiness elicits the imagination, he defines the tea room as an embodiment of the beauty of "imperfection" (wabi-sabi), a space that achieves completion only through the interpretive participation of the recipient. Many readers regard this conception as uniquely Japanese, and thus treat Okakura's text as an expression of an irreducibly national culture.

Yet when those who inhabit this "inside" perspective—or those outside it—are confronted with a broader constellation of texts and critiques, such as the Laocoön and the aesthetic theory of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, the critical writings of Jin Shengtan in China, or the reflections of figures such as George Sand, Alfred de Vigny, Otto Ludwig, Ludovico Ariosto, Corneille, and the comparative criticism of Qian Zhongshu (Zhang, 2014, p. 145), they encounter a recurring insight: that spatial or formal indeterminacy stimulates the imagination, and that art and beauty are often presented in incomplete forms precisely so that they may be completed in the mind of the recipient. When this insight is articulated through Lessing's concept of the "pregnant moment" (Zhang, 2014, pp. 140–45), those situated within Japanese culture may find their fore-structures of understanding disrupted and their ethnocentric claim to cultural exclusivity called into question.[1]

At the same time, those positioned outside Japanese culture discover that the notion of the "pregnant moment" in art and beauty is not foreign to Japan, thereby revising their own interpretive preconceptions. Through such reciprocal transformations, participants enter into genuine communication, overcome cultural ghettoization, and move beyond social division, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia. In this way, hospitality-oriented argument becomes not merely a theoretical ideal, but a practical methodology for sustaining diversity while fostering mutual understanding on a global scale.

VI. Conclusion

This study has argued that, in a contemporary world increasingly shaped by globalism and the normative valorization of diversity, the intensification of social division and xenophobia can be traced, in part, to what may be described—drawing on the work of Walter Benn Michaels—as a Copernican turn in postmodern modes of textual reading. In response to this condition, the essay proposes a discourse of "hospitality" as a critical and practical alternative.

At the outset, the structural features of contemporary globalism were surveyed, with

[1] For further examples, see Zhang's series of research monographs and book chapters, and the work of Suzuki (2021).

particular attention to the way in which its permissive stance toward diversity converges with a logic analogous to that of empire. It was shown that diversity, as a central value of neoliberal globalism, is closely intertwined with regimes of self-responsibility and the amplification of socioeconomic inequality. Within this configuration, postmodern approaches to textual interpretation and the corresponding understanding of the world were identified as contributing to a persistent failure of communication, thereby reinforcing social fragmentation and xenophobic tendencies.

Against this background, the study advanced a humanistic intervention that departs from a relativistic model of tolerance—cognate with endurance and non-interference—and instead articulates a discourse of hospitality, understood as a practice grounded in mutual transformation and understanding. As a concrete methodological instantiation of this approach, the essay turned to East–West Studies and to the framework of world literature, examining them as sites in which hospitable modes of argument and interpretation can be enacted.

Ultimately, this inquiry contends that, if the world is to preserve diversity while counteracting social division, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia, it must cultivate, at both regional and global levels, forms of hospitable dialogue and argument among cultures and communities. In this sense, East–West Studies and world-literary practices are not merely academic enterprises, but indispensable methodological and ethical resources for fostering mutual understanding in an increasingly interconnected yet deeply divided world.

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