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Editorial Remarks

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According to Slavoj Žižek, “pandemics” is a global situation where “we are all bombarded precisely by calls not to touch others but to isolate ourselves, to maintain proper corporeal distance.” In the end, however, Zizek ascertains that “there is a hope that corporeal distancing will even strengthen the intensity of our link with others.” The photos of French neighbors sharing wine bottles through adjacent windows are one such example of deepening our human relations amid pandemics. However, Žižek does not give us an exact indication of how our love of neighbors will pan out after social order is restored back to normal. Nor does he explain sharing wine bottles will deepen our humanitarian link with our neighbors. Instead, the first thing we hear after lockdown is lifted in many cities in the U.S. is a massive citizen outcry against racism after the death of George Floyd by the apparently suffocating “touch” and brutality against that poor African American soul by the police. *Culture and Empathy* could not publish our first issue of Vol. 3 in March this year due to the pandemic, and the current issue is filled with sadness and anger against human absurdity that hardly shows the silver lining after the pandemic.

The current issue (Vol. 3, No. 1-2) presents three articles and three book reviews. Charles Hampden-Turner, Raymond Ferris Abelin, and Chris Rowley provide twenty illustrative examples to show how innovation has been a fundamental force of movement in economic history where culture has continued to play pivotal roles. Their theoretical focus is on “the informal” that operates outside of the established formal and more organized methods of innovation. The paper argues that the dynamics between the informal and formal is particularly challenging to Western cultures due to increased competition outside of the well-defined rules, regulations, and guidelines intended to sustain organizational development. Innovation therefore is a key driver of the informal economy, a conclusion that is radically different from conventional economics. The authors contend that the resulting rapid, sometimes radical, systemic changes are the result of informal economic forces, because formal economies have become heavily reliant on technological innovation. Each illustrative example analyzes how the informality comes to the rescue of the formality within the context of culture and innovation.

Ingyu Oh and Wonho Jang present the “glocal” aspect of the K-pop revolution in the 21st century pop culture in South Korea. They argue that K-pop is a result of the glocalization of Western pop music first by importing it from the West, localizing it in South Korea, and exporting it back to the West. Simply put, glocalization refers to a successful localization of a foreign global product so much that the original developers of that product want to import the local variations instead of their original version. The paper argues that glocalization is therefore a highly proactive countermeasure to globalization. Hallyu’s success with glocalization demonstrates that the domestic Korean demand for high quality pop culture has brought about

new types of competition that call for importing global pop content and simultaneously aiming to produce better quality versions than the originals. They also clarify that the content localization in South Korea promoted “female universalism” vis-à-vis male universalism to promote K-pop mostly among female fans of the world. These views are radically different from some of the ongoing misunderstanding about K-pop, which asserts that it is a copy of J-pop or American hip hop with few innovations.

Yin Li and DongGen Rui compares border areas between North Korea and China on the one hand and between San Diego and Tijuana on the other. The paper highlights the fact that the cross-border cities in China, especially the Tumen River area, has been confronted with two main issues: “stability” and “security.” The dichotomized role the borderland plays includes “blocking” foreigners and “connecting” them with the Chinese. This paper therefore provides interpretations of the multifunctional aspects of borderlands by introducing various theories of border region studies. It analyzes the opportunities and challenges and that the administration of the border is facing, such as mutual cooperation, transnational migrations, social disintegration, and self-identification, among others. The authors argue that these cross-border cities should not be considered as politically or socially sensitive zones but instead bridges that promotes the development and the communication of communities on both sides of the border, drawing on the advantages and avoiding the disadvantages.

Three book reviews deal with empathy, K-pop, and the philosophy of emotion. Keith Jackson reviews a book on intercultural empathy and human resource development; Xosé Crisanto Gándara Eiroa provides his review of two books on K-pop in Spain; and Mark Lovas shares his thoughts after reading a book on the history of emotions.

We hope Vol. 3, No. 1-2 will help scholars and students of innovation, K-pop, and cross-border cities obtain valuable information on each topic. *C & E* will continue to strive to provide ambitious and meaningful contributions for each fresh issue amid the pandemic.

John Lie, Ingyu Oh, and Wonho Jang