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Editorial Remarks

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Seemingly incurable, the pandemic virus named Covid-19 is teaching everyone on Earth a new lesson about our lives and the environment we are in: we are now destined to live with all things natural and artificial as “new normal” where the death of all living beings is no longer an individual and local event but a collective phenomenon occurring simultaneously all over the world. Hundreds of koalas are burnt to death while hundreds of thousands of people are killed by the globally pandemic virus. It is undeniable that the new normal was caused by human hubris. Scientific progress including vaccines and treatments did not stop the new normal from occurring on a global scale. An endless list of new killers, including new strains of viruses, will only expand its length as the list of artificial countermeasures that intend to defy human mortality lengthens. Against the backdrop of the new normal, *Culture and Empathy* found it exceedingly difficult to edit four issues this year. The result is a two issue-volume, of which this one is the last of the two.

The current issue (Vol. 3, No. 3-4) presents five articles and three book reviews. Two articles by a Japanese journalist and a Korean Japanese lawyer, both interested in the inequality of gender and ethnic minorities. The other two articles are about Hallyu or the Korean Wave, while the fifth one is about the Covid-19 in Brazil.

Ryūichi Kitano’s “An Abridged Version of My Book, *Asahi Shimbun no Ianfu Hōdō to Saiban* [The Reports of Comfort Women by the Asahi Newspaper and Litigations]” is literally a summary of his book on the same topic. Kitano is a senior editor at the *Asahi Shimbun* and has dedicated his career to the study of inequalities and social injustice in Japan and elsewhere. Particularly, he has spent many years studying and reporting the wartime sex slaves or the comfort women. Will Kim’s “Reverse-Engineering Racism Amidst the Pandemic” deals with the issue of racism against Asians in the U.S. and against Koreans in Japan particularly during the pandemic. Both articles are timely contribution to the overall problem of inequality and discrimination.

Vincenzo Cichelli and Sylvie Octobre’s “Cosmopolitan Empowerments and Biographical Trajectories among Young French Fans of Hallyu” analyzes the fandom of the Korean Wave in France using a conceptual and theoretical term “cosmopolitan empowerments.” Julia Trzcńska’s “K-Pop Fandom as a Left-Wing Political Force? The Case of Poland” also deals with fandom politics in Poland, using various sources on the politicization of music fandom.

Finally, Im’s “Solidarity chains among marginalized people to fight Covid-19 in Brazil” extensively documents the plight of pandemic crises in slums of main cities in Brazil. She

focuses on the poor sector of Brazilian society to demonstrate the unequal distribution of healthcare resources across the class and racial spectrum.

Three book reviews deal with Japanese racism against Koreans and the African American influence on K-pop. Ingyu Oh reviewed Kitano's book on the comfort women issue with a focus on the legal proceedings initiated by the right-wing faction of Japanese society and Nagae's book on Japanese bookstores that are inundated with books on hatred against Koreans. Sarah Keith reviewed Anderson's book on K-pop, where she argues that the influence of African American music on the Korean pop has been noticeable.

We hope Vol. 3, No. 3-4 will help scholars and students of comfort women, racism, K-pop, and Covid-19 obtain valuable information on each topic. *C & E* will continue to strive to provide ambitious and meaningful contributions to each fresh issue amid the pandemic.

John Lie, Ingyu Oh, and Wonho Jang