Editorial

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As I write this editorial the threat of the coronavirus pandemic continues and I am, like many around the world, eagerly waiting to see how American politics and foreign policy unfold under President Biden. I care not only as a scholar of Taiwan studies interested in the dynamics of US–Taiwan–China geopolitics but also as a global citizen concerned about the state of democracy in general and the future of our world. In studies of globalisation, it is often understood that ‘local’ and ‘global’ are so intertwined that it is perhaps more accurate to describe the process as ‘glocalisation’. In his contemplation of the rise of Trumpism, Brexit, and right-wing populism in different corners of the globe partly due to globalisation, Michael J. Sandel (2020) reminds us of the importance of looking at the bigger picture beyond party politics and the market economy. At a time when anger against elites has fractured the social, political, and cultural fabrics of democracy, any hope of a moral and civic renewal depends on a more profound understanding of the decades of increasing inequality and cultural resentment; and the bigger picture in Sandel’s view is a reckoning with meritocracy.

In a similar spirit of attempting to look at the bigger picture and beyond the familiar and immediate, the *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* values the opportunity to publish a topical section which engages in literature and ecology. In their introduction to this issue, guest editors Andrea Bachner and David Der-wei Wang state:

Taiwan, as an island that encompasses a particularly wide range of biotopes, redefines insularity in its connectivity to other global spaces and networks: it pits its infinite potential for different encounters, relations, and comparisons against any bias of smallness and isolation.

'Ecologising Taiwan' thus means 'to think ecologically about, from, as well as by way of Taiwan'. Bachner and Wang further explain the inspiring contributions and connectivity of the six selected original research papers by Kyle Shernuk, Yuwen Hsiung, Darryl Sterk, Mark McConaghy, Brian Skerratt, and Carlos Rojas.

Phyllis Yu-ting Huang's research article, 'The Returnee as an Outsider: Reunion and Division in Wang Quan'an's *Apart Together* (團圓, *tuan yuan*)' is not part of the 'Ecologising Taiwan' topical section. However, by illuminating how the Chinese filmmaker Wang Quan'an provides an alternative, bottom-up perspective on the 'Taiwan issue' which contests the People's Republic of China's official discourse of cross-strait reunification in the movie *Apart Together*, Huang's essay echoes the forum discussion in this issue. Gunter Schubert's position paper, entitled 'Delimiting "Cross-Strait Studies": *Kua'an* (跨岸) vs. *Liang'an* (兩岸)', proposes to recognise a new research field of 'cross-strait studies', characterised by a specific analytical *kua'an* (trans-strait, 跨岸) perspective. Schubert claims that *kua'an* must be distinguished from *liang'an* (cross-strait, 兩岸). He stresses the analytical surplus value of cross-strait studies and explains why researchers must distinguish between *kua'an* and *liang'an* as two different, though complementary, approaches to the cross-strait relationship. Responses to Schubert's proposition are given by Shelley Rigger, Beatrice Zani, Syaru Shirley Lin, and Chih-Jou Jay Chen. Each offers a thoughtful reply from the multiple angles of international politics, migration flows, economic and social interactions, *Taishang* studies, and people-to-people civic exchanges.

In the book reviews section, Carrie Poon introduces Jina E. Kim's *Urban Modernities in Colonial Korea and Taiwan* (2019), Wei-ting Yen reflects on Hsiao, Kuan, and Wang's (eds) *Taiwan's Social Welfare Movements and Policy Impact, 2000–2018* (台灣的社會福利運動與政策效應: 2000–2018, published in 2018), and Edward Vickers reviews two manuscripts—Huang and Lee's *Heritage, Memory and Punishment: Remembering Colonial Prisons in East Asia* (2019) and Hyun Kyung Lee's *'Difficult Heritage' in Nation Building: South Korea and Post-Conflict Japanese Colonial Occupation Architecture* (2019). The books reviewed in this issue again demonstrate the journal's commitment to broaden Taiwan studies as an area-based research field that embraces interdisciplinarity.

Finally, on an editorial note, we are aware that several style authorities have recently changed their guidance on the capitalisation of words like 'Black', 'White', 'Indigenous', and 'Aboriginal'. This is an incredibly complex issue and one the journal's Executive Editorial Board takes very seriously. After careful consideration, we have decided not to impose mandatory capitalisation for the time being as the circumstances where those changes have been made are very different to questions of ethnicity, race, and identity in the Taiwan context, where such terms may carry diverse meanings. It is our position to continue to respect the choice of individual authors on whether or not to capitalise such terms in their articles.

References

- Sandel, Michael J. (2020) *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.