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Dear Cheryl, Shashi, and Sunny,

I want to again thank you, Faye, and the external reader for your thoughtful and productive comments. They were instructive not only for revisions to this article, but also for my thinking regarding the larger project of which this is a part. While I cannot attest to how well I addressed your concerns, I am confident that this document is stronger and more focused because of your feedback.

I reorganized the opening pages in response to your and the external reader’s observations about their abstruseness. Taking the external reader’s suggestion about moving the discussion of postcolonial capitalism, and both your and the reader’s suggestions about the role of culture in the critique of postcolonial capitalism, I revised the opening section to address the role of culture in relation to contradictions between capital’s abstraction and need for heterogeneity. I use Lowe (and Lowe and Lloyd) to start clearing space for the distinction between “postcolonial” and “global” capitalism that I develop in the subsequent section. I also worked to more explicitly map my argument about the novel, and clarified the link between recognition and virtuality, a concept that I unpack in the introduction and then more clearly return to throughout the article in keeping with your comments.

This reorganization cleared space for me, in the added second section, to relocate the discussion of queer diaspora, condensed my discussion of postcolonial capitalism (via Sanyal), and put it into direct conversation with Rod Ferguson’s discussion of queer of color critique. In the process, I worked to clarify some of the terms I use from Sanyal (like “non-capital”), while showing how Sanyal’s and Ferguson’s (and by extension, Lowe’s) discussions of surplus labor, in supplement, give purchase for understanding the specifically postcolonial contours of multicultural recognition as distinct from the “neoliberal multiculturalism” associated with circuits of U.S. imperialism or globalization. In this section, I also added a close reading of the passage from which I took part of the title as a way of anchoring the discussion of diaspora, acknowledging the long multicultural history of Southeast Asia, and bringing together the theoretical strands to orient the critical concepts to one another, as Faye encouraged.

To further orient the critical concepts, I reworked the discussion of recognition by replacing the paragraphs on Markell’s critique of recognition with an engagement with Eve Sedgwick’s “chains of vicarious investment.” Here, I address how Sedgwick’s concept of vicarity resonates with my discussion of virtuality and provides a better frame (via Munoz) for thinking through practices of identification between multiply-marginalized queer of color/queer diasporic subjects.

I also worked to address issues of terminological imprecision you and Faye noted, and to remove some of the critical/theoretical frameworks that were underdeveloped and for which there was not enough room, as suggested by the outside reader. While I have larger concerns associated with genre and form (in re: the “transnational ethnic bildungsroman”), these were not clear in the initial draft and led to the slippage between “multicultural literature” and “postcolonial literature.” I removed genre-oriented language and undeveloped lines of thinking, and instead worked to note, if sometimes implicitly, why I turned to Chua’s novel to do this work (largely because it is non-developmental, does not resolve in “community,” emphasizes failure, etc.). At a slightly smaller scale, I addressed the vague language and awkward terminology to help with sentence level clarity. In response to Faye’s suggestion, I also worked to clarify the relationship between the “implied author” and narrator by more clearly attributing agency (often to Chua) in places that seemed to conflate the two. In keeping with the suggestions of the outside reader, I also removed the underdeveloped discussion of fetishism and abjection, and also removed the discussion of Butler because it just did not seem necessary and contributed to the “cryptic feel” that you noted.

While I have read Laura Kang’s “The Uses of Asianization” (and use it elsewhere in a discussion of the racialization of debt), I did not draw on it in this article primarily because I removed most of the language about the articulation of the global and the postcolonial—taking it as something of a given so that I could focus on the infolding of postcolonial formal and informal economies. Showing how each of these is striated by the global seemed to be too involved for this article, but is certainly something I try to keep on the radar in my other work. I did, however, include reference to a few others who have written on *Gold* (Chae, Sohn, and Wang). While I ultimately cut an extended engagement with this work because it seemed tangential, I find it interesting that, for a novel where sex figures so prominently, many of its interlocutors have presented seemingly sex-negative, instrumental accounts (Casual sex is “empty of meaning?” Sex work is largely a metaphor for imperialism and sex workers have no agency? Queer is a theme?). Nonetheless, these articles were helpful as I worked to better contextualize the novel in the histories of Southeast Asia, and distinguish my interpretation of from procedural accounts of globalization.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to revise this article. No matter the outcome, I am excited to see this special issue of ARIEL come to fruition.

Warm regards,



Travis Sands