Dear Dr. Gross, Dr. Bell-Garcia, and the reviewers,

Thank you again for considering my essay for publication in the *International Journal of Communication*. I truly appreciate all of the feedback that you have provided. Both rounds have been extremely helpful for sharpening my argument, which was a bit vague and disorganized at the outset. You have all been very generous.

The most recent version of my manuscript was 8996 words, including the abstract, keywords, and references, until I had to add my name, affiliation, and the brief acknowledgements. It is now 9026 words. I hope that is OK. Regarding your second set of comments on my draft, I have done my best to address all of your very valid concerns.

In response to Reviewer A’s feedback, I reworked the abstract by locating Mann and his work in the US, noting how the fantasy in his work obscures and upholds capitalism, while reinforcing neoliberalism. In the abstract and in the body, I used language lifted from the reviewer’s comments, specifically “…glossed with kindness and a depoliticization…”, which was a nice phrasing of what I was trying to get at when critiquing Mann’s videos and their cultural/discursive roles.

From there, I used Fraser’s concept of “progressive neoliberalism” when discussing the “actual existing neoliberal” conditions through which Mann and his content have been produced. I was unaware of her development of that concept, and am thankful it was introduced in the feedback. That concept helped with further building out, while simultaneously narrowing down, the discussion on neoliberalism and the fantasy worlds Mann represents in his videos.

With that, “progressive neoliberalism” was useful for “reconciling the contradictory and loose claims in the revised text” pertaining to neoliberalism and politics in the US, as it provided a specific term/concept that could be deployed for description and analysis. The term/concept is introduced on page 3, and discussed further on page 9.

Lastly, regarding Reviewer A’s comments, I worked to tighten up the sentences and paragraphs, shaped the draft to reflect the conclusion, added as subheading to the conclusion, and addressed the typos, including correcting Jason Glynos’ name.

Tightening up the manuscript opened up the word count a bit more, which allowed me to develop the section on audiences, as recommended by Reviewer B. In that section, I noted Mann’s popularity and the ease of accessing the platform (page 21), and framed the comments in terms of uses and gratifications theory, while bringing in nuanced concepts/insights such as “ironic viewing,” and the significance of melodrama to viewer engagement with media content.

I changed the title of the section from “Audiences, Responses, and Reactions” to “Audiences, Critiques, and Connections,” to better reflect the changes that were made. The reading suggestions were also very helpful, as they exposed me to new analytical approaches and literature. Furthermore, while reading the section on ethics in Thelwall’s chapter, one of the headings was titled “Appropriate Uses of YouTube Data,” which I quickly read without the word “data.” That reminded me of uses and gratifications theory, which I thought would be the place to start with substantiating the analysis. Although I did not cite Reviewer B’s suggested articles, they were helpful nonetheless, and will be in the future.

All of my changes are in red type. Again, thank you for all of your generous feedback, and considering my manuscript for publication in the *International Journal of Communication*.

Best,

Sean T. Leavey