It is nice to be able to respond to clear and direct criticism out in the open for once – rather reminds me of why I wanted to join this profession in the first place. Richter singles out my specification of the duration of the social sequence to be discussed for praise, and indeed I think this makes a crucial difference. I offer this kind of specification as a critique of Foucault (and with Said against Foucault), however, and I should like to begin by modifying this address. The reason is that I recently read Foucault’s last lectures (from Stanford, Fall Term 1983), where he specified his method of being one of studying how problematisations of certain social phenomena emerge historically. He explains:

‘Some people have interpreted this type of analysis as a form of “historical idealism” […] when I say that I am studying the “problematisation” of madness, crime, or sexuality, it is not a way of denying the reality of such phenomena. On the contrary, I have tried to show that it was precisely some real existent in the world which was the target of social regulation at a given moment. The question I raise is this one: How and why were very different things in the world gathered together, characterized, analyzed, and treated as, for example, “mental illness”? [...] I think there is a relation between the thing which is problematized and the process of problematization. The problematization is an “answer” to a concrete situation which is real. [...] a given problematization is not an effect or consequence of a historical context or situation, but is an answer given by definite individuals (although you may find this same answer given in a series of texts, and at a certain point the answer may become so general that it also becomes anonymous).” (Foucault 1999: 171-172).

As you will see, here the famous Foucauldian facelessness emerges simply as a post hoc phenomenon, something that has validity after a certain representation of the real has become part of what we simply take for granted, the doxa. Before that, however, there is an individual reception that actually forms the representation which then goes on to become doxic. Thus, the criticism waged by Said (and me) of how Foucault disregards specific individuals and specific texts is not valid for the very late Foucault, and I think I owe it to all concerned to note that. So, the very late Foucault seems to be in agreement that specific individuals and specific texts are crucial (although that should in no way be taken to mean that they generate the problems to be solved, of course.)

Richter’s major line of attack does not concern the piece under discussion, but is that my discourse analyses seem to come up a bit short by comparison to Doty inasmuch as they do not have the same rich layering. Well, I can simply agree. I think that our goal as social scientists should be to write monographs about social sequences that are important not only because they tell us something new about those sequences – for example what kind of identities are at play - but also about how what is going on within those sequences is of wider importance to understand a certain phenomenon – for example, identity.
Doty’s work does that better than my *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, no doubt about it. I should like to add, however, that I write the piece under discussion here, on practices, first and foremost as a contribution to IR method. I strongly feel that one of the key weaknesses of our discipline is that we operate at a distance from general social theory and general social method – we evolve standards about what an article is and what a theory is that are, in a degree, out of synch with what is going on in other social sciences. Of course, in order to be a separate discipline, this is a necessity, but we have taken it rather too far. One of the key resulting weaknesses is a neglect of method. My *Millennium* piece was written in the spirit of mending that particular fence. (Eventually, I hope to meld it into a book on diplomacy, though).

Weldes raises a number of questions, the most important of which seems to me to be the relationship of practice to discourse. She is too nice to put it like this, but the basic challenge seems to be something like “if the point is that they are intertwined, have always been and will always be, then isn’t it a step back to separate them?”. Actually, one of Millennium’s referees (whom I incidentally strongly believe to be in our midst) put it roughly in those terms. I agree that the whole point of discourse analysis is to get at the social not from the individual, not from the structure, but from somewhere in between. Discourse analysis is, in my thinking, an answer to the agency/structure debate, in that instead of keeping one of them an analytical primitive and analysing the other, we formulate some intermediate layer and play it from there (I should like to refer to Doty’s article in *EJIR* as state of the art on this). So, when I have separated practices from discourse, it is in the spirit of pinching part of a ball of jello and giving it a separate name, while it is actually part of the same thing in the first place. I suppose that is what is called ‘separate for analytical purposes’. My practices remain discursive practices. The question then becomes to what extent explanans may be said to be separate from explanandum, and this is a key question, for if practices cannot be said to be something else than discourse (at least in analytical terms), then the kind of analysis I suggest cannot be said to be causal, for in order for A to cause B, B has to take after A, B would not have taken place if A had not taken place first, *and* A has to be separate from B.

Weldes suggests a different modeling of my argument than I do myself. My problem with her model is that it presupposes a good fit between ‘conceptual power of stories’ and ‘possible actions’ a bit too easily. To take an example of which a number of us presumably have practical experience, I should not think that I am alone in always having told myself that, since I am this and this kind of person, I go to bed with this and that kind of person – and then there are the exceptions that one has to deal with in some way or the other… Put less flippantly, since the days of Parsons, social theory has tended to chop up the field of study in two entities (for him it was culture and social structure), where the basic idea was to separate schemata for action with actions themselves. I made my suggestion of discourse and practice as alternatives for two basic reasons:

a) to underlined the structured and humanly made character of both of these;
b) to divert critical IR studies more in the direction of interactive data rather than texts.
Weldes suggests that my analysis ‘becomes quite similar to conventional bureaucratic politics’ (p8n9 – Weldes is so nice, when she feels she is making a point that is perhaps a bit too direct, she puts it in a footnote), Indeed, and I do not want to apologise for this. Since the hayday of Graham Allison, the bureaucratic side of IR has been somewhat bracketed. This, I think, is a mistake. In a heavily institutionalized setting such as those which surround a lot of the stuff we study, the study of bureaucratic action is often of key importance. Again, perhaps our study of texts as key data has in some degree keyt us away from these other kinds of data.

Finally, Weldes seems to charge that I overlook ‘popular culture’ in this piece. Well yes, but when the topic is how a specifically elitist practice like diplomacy incorporates a new group like local politicians, this is unavoidable. At least I studied specific persons – local politicians at the extreme periphery of a peripheral state – which is already a lot farther out than most IR scholars ever venture. In general, I agree that we should study popular practices, though, but I should like to add the caveat that we should come back to more traditional problematiques when we do so. It may be highly interesting to read, say, an analysis of how Russians tend to decode/read representations of American foreign policy in Tom Clancy’s novels, but in order for this to be IR rather than cultural studies, I should like to be a stick in the mud and argue that such an analysis will have to be linked to what is going on either at some more aggregate level of social life somewhere, or to the unfolding of a specific social sequence in the world (say, a trade deal or a war). To put it in terms of the model that I propose: any practice and any identity is fair game, but the impact that it may have on the kinds of discourses we specialize in as IR scholars should be specified.