This set of comments has two parts that are not well-integrated with each other. In the first part, I try to explain what my book brings to the table of students of identity. The second part is a response to the observations and criticisms offered by Jutta and Jim.

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In *Our Enemies and US* I set out to question the presumed objectivity of American political science (and the profession’s alleged commitment to democracy) by examining political scientists’ changing characterizations of regimes that have become America’s enemies as well as their changing characterizations of America itself. My argument, as I summarized it in the concluding chapter, was that

American political science is ideological, and its unacknowledged, underlying ideal is *America*. Its ostensibly objective theoretical discourse reflects successive reconstitutions of the identity of US in relation to the identity of “Other” states, especially those that became America’s chief enemies. In the course of America’s major international conflicts, political science scholarship has re-visioned America and its enemies in ways that have greatly magnified the differences between them. After the conflicts, these revised, highly polarized images have been projected upon the past, obliterating earlier portrayals of America and its yet-to-be enemies as far more alike than present theory would have them.

I was trained in the womb of the mainstream of IR; my early work was quantitative and mathematical in orientation. When I launched my critique of the “democratic” peace, which gave birth to the book project, I was initially dismayed to hear a colleague remark that I was becoming a “constructivist,” or, horror of horrors, a “post-modernist.” But I gradually reconciled myself to this new “identity,” and have come to see that my book – inasmuch as it focused on identity-change embedded in a historical and political context -- indeed had a strong affinity with the constructivist literature.

Now what value does my book potentially add to the already-crowded and already-rich field of identity studies in IR? In the past decade constructivist scholars have produced an impressive array of studies documenting the social, political and historical embeddedness of the identities of various national and sub-national political actors. But, like IR scholars more generally, they seem to have shied away from reflecting on the social and historical embeddedness of their own knowledge production efforts. Constructivists (or at least “conventional” constructivists, to borrow Ted’s category) study how the identity of social actors is mutually-constituted with these actors’ visions of Others even as they (constructivists) claim an exemption for themselves from this social dynamic of mutual-constitution. Our own discipline’s identity, in other words, is bracketed out of the picture.
So here’s my 2 cents. I think that the texts of the professional fields of which we are part – the fields of IR, political science and allied disciplines – are no less legitimate, and no less rewarding, objects of analysis than the discourse of prime ministers, foreign policy bureaucrats, NGO executives, or Hollywood motion pictures. Moreover, I believe that the study of identity could be enriched by making it more reflexive, namely by taking into account the identity in which our own scholarship is rooted. Would our scholarship not be more realistic if we attempted to theorize the history and politics of identity in a way that took into account the embeddedness of our theory in the history and politics of our own nation, gender, or class?

What shape exactly reflexive theorizing might take I do not quite know, but I would cite one of the other works included in this panel -- Roxanne Doty’s *Imperial Encounters* – as a compelling attempt to go in that direction; in chapter 7 Roxanne analyzes two important contemporary IR texts with the same critical tools she uses throughout the book to deconstruct (non-IR) Northern representations of the North/South. More self-serveingly, I could cite my critique of the democratic peace as another, far-from-perfect, example of reflexivity. At the end of day, the reflexive route may well lead to a dead-end. Still, for my money, it promises an exciting, stimulating intellectual adventure, well-worth a try even if it ultimately ends in failure.

[Incidentally, another example of reflexive analysis in IR comes to mind, though it does not deal with identity per se. It is Deborah Larson’s critique of deterrence theory (“Deterrence Theory and the Cold War,” Radical History Review, 1995), whose premise was that “social scientific theories are invariably shaped by their intellectual, social and political contexts, and deterrence theory is no exception. . . . The events of the Cold War shaped the questions, methods, and findings of deterrence theory. The purpose of this essay is to explore how the Cold War shaped and ultimately deformed deterrence theory.”]

Let me now respond to Jutta and Jim’s comments. Jutta is such a good soul that she put her criticisms under the veil of five “suggestions for future research;” and, as Iver noted in his own response, she is so nice that she placed her most biting criticisms in footnotes, in small font. Jim, too, kindly qualified his criticisms with refrains such as “surely he had done enough for one book.” Thanks guys!

I will orient most of my response around Jutta’s five suggestions – Jim’s comments dovetail nicely with some of these suggestions (as well as with Jutta’s footnote), and so I will bring them in at the relevant points. My responses, to borrow Ted’s categories again, consist of “mea culpa,” “yep,” and “huh, I really don’t understand what you are saying.”

Jutta’s first point is that all three works on this panel, including mine, lack “an explicit concern with the ‘uptake’ of discursive constructions by their audiences.” Mea culpa. The only admittedly-lame excuse for this omission I can come up with is that political scientific discourse does not have much of an audience. Who reads the APSR anyway? Heck, we don’t even read it ourselves . . .

Jutta suggests that to remedy this problem we could deploy the concept of interpellation. Staring at my computer screen as I write these lines, I note that the spellchecker reacted to
“interpellation” with a fat, red underline. To be honest, like the spellchecker, I profess haziness on this concept. I am not sufficiently familiar with the literature Jutta cites to take a stand here.

Jutta’s second point is that my book, inasmuch as it focuses on the writings of “the most prominent, discipline-defining American political scientists,” is skewed toward elite discourse, as opposed to more “popular” discourse. Again, mea culpa. In defense of this elite-focus I would only say that had I chosen to pay more attention to less prominent scholars, positivistically-inclined readers would have charged that my “sample” is not adequately representative of political science (they have anyway . . .).

Incidentally, though I did not put it in these words, one of the criticisms I made in my commentary on the “power and identity” essays was that they were skewed toward elites – thanks, Jutta, for keeping me honest!

But not to worry. If my analysis of the workings of power in the profession is correct, then I should soon find myself, as a result of having published this book, in exile at Northeast Overshoe State College or Southwest Cornfield State. This will give me an excellent opportunity to do a participant-observer, ethnographic study of the profession as seen from below.

Jutta’s third suggestion is that “we should make more use of the notion of intertextuality.” Yep. The texts I focused on were found largely in political science journals and textbooks, and Jutta correctly implies that my study could have been enriched by examining these texts alongside texts from other realms. It would have been enlightening to juxtapose IR texts with official State Department or Pentagon documents, for example. As for the cultural realm that Jutta herself seems most passionate about – science fiction – I have to confess that, though it sounds like a great idea, my familiarity with sci-fi is far too limited to allow me to analyze inter-textual relations between, say, Star Trek and IR theory texts.

Jim and Jutta (in her fourth “suggestion”) seem to agree that the study of identity discourse could (and should) be enhanced by examining the embeddedness of such discourse in bureaucratic institutions. In Jutta’s words, “Power is not solely a matter of discursive (i.e., textual, linguistic) constitution. Some discourses are more powerful as a result of their location in pre-existing . . . institutions.” Jim and Jutta both kindly recognize that I made a small if inadequate step in this direction. Jim approvingly observes that in my book “power has substance and resides in state and private institutions.” But he rightly takes me to task for not going far (or deep) enough, namely for not adequately “examining the daily practices in which power is exercised in the discipline – such as the practices by which scholars are recruited, trained and evaluated.” Mea culpa.

Jim correctly observes that “Oren’s account privileges national identity as the locus of identity most important to organizing the discipline of political science without considering how other perspectives of self and other may contribute to ideology. Oren convinces me that national identity is important, but I suspect that most of the scholars he examines were also writing from the perspectives of a member of a dominant class in relation to domestic others, and from the masculine perspective in relation to a feminine other.” This critical observation nicely parallels Jutta’s fifth point (building on C. Enloe’s insight) – that “Discursive production of and
contestation over identity is very likely to involve other forms of politics: class relations, gender relations, race relations, colonial relations and so on may impinge on the politics of discourses of [national] identity.” This criticism is well-taken. Aspects of identity such as gender and class may be no less important in shaping one’s perspective than his/her nationality --in actuality various “hierarchies of power” are interconnected in complex ways. An analytical focus on national identity may be justified on practical grounds (thanks again, Jim, for acknowledging that it’s enough for one book!), but we should be careful not to take it to the point of reifying the distinction between nationality and other dimensions of identity politics.

Jutta, as I noted earlier, relegated what might be her sharpest criticism to a footnote. There, she writes that “It is sometimes unclear whether Ido is consistently working with a notion of identity as subject position in Roxanne’s and Iver’s sense. The language of self-image, for example, connotes a more psychological than discursive conception.” Jim articulates a related point, I think, when he notes that my work “most closely approximates the positivist approach” and that I “treat ideology and power almost as variables . . . interconnected but analytically, if not actually discrete phenomena.”

These points are well-taken. As I indicated above, I was trained in the womb of the positivist mainstream of the discipline and it took me years, until I was almost finished with the book, to fully reconcile myself to, and feel intellectually comfortable with, the anti-positivist views of Nietzsche, Foucault and Said, among others. Consequently, even though the book’s concluding message is anti-positivist in orientation, and even though the introductory chapter contains some references to Foucault and Said, the book itself does have a positivist flavor to it and can be read, as Jim has read it, as containing something like a causal model in it. Had I been starting all over again, I might have avoided deploying the concept of “ideology” (which implies that the author himself is putatively privileged to know the world free of perspective), and I might have “translated” my argument to the language of discourse analysis (to Jim’s chagrin, perhaps). In fact, Jutta in her comments has done just that. I began this response with a recapitulation of the argument in my words, so let me end with Jutta’s translation: my book explores “transformations in the representations of the enemy constructed in the discursive practices of the U.S. state as the result of conflict significantly transformed the representational practices of the discipline. The effect was the (re)production of the subject position of the discipline as a locus of hegemony, where particular, contestable meanings are (temporarily) fixed.”