Locating identity: performativity, foreign policy and state action

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Abstract. This article examines the politics and explanatory plausibility of performative accounts of state action through a critical analysis of the themes of continuity and change in the work of David Campbell. As political interventions, performative models reproduce a number of taken-for-granted conceptual distinctions. As explanations, performative models are undermined by an account of the social that privileges representation. Drawing on materialist feminist critiques of performativity, I argue for the necessity of locating accounts of subject formation and state action in the multiple logics that constitute the social.

In justifying their work, post-structuralists[1] routinely foreground its politics. Such work 'self-consciously adopts a perspective' as it sets out to 'consider the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another'.[2] Drawing on performative accounts of subjectivity, post-structuralists highlight the ways in which dominant forms of representation in International Relations participate in and serve to reproduce the very realities they claim only to explain.[3] In contrast, post-structuralism is more 'sensitive' to the 'contingency, heterogeneity, and radical "difference"' that characterize world politics: it is 'the most exciting and least dangerous way of understanding and participating in a changing world'.[4] A key argument for preferring post-structuralism over other forms of analysis, then, is its claim to enact a superior politics. To offer a political analysis of this work, and in particular of its political effects, is therefore to take it on its own terms. It is to ask: how adequate are these analyses to the terms in which they are framed? What sort of politics do post-structural analyses enact? In this article, I examine the politics of performative accounts of state action through analysis of themes of continuity and change in the work of David Campbell.

The diversity of post-structuralist analysis in International Relations makes it easy but also ultimately unsatisfactory to 'take a "scatter-gun" approach to the

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[1] This literature is sometimes less precisely dubbed postmodern; e.g., Jim George, *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1994), ch. 8; cf. David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edn. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 276, n.23. For the broader context, see François Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[2] Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 4.

[3] For example, Cynthia Weber, 'Performative States,' *Millennium*, 27 (1998), pp. 83–90.

[4] Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp. 4–5; George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, pp. 24, 216.

central questions by citing many authors and gesturing at general tendencies'.[5] Here I offer a more finely-grained analysis. Campbell is a key figure in the post-structuralist attempt to read international politics through 'an identity politics narrative' and a leading advocate for the superiority of performative accounts of subjectivity.[6] Analysis of his work thus offers a window on to, and has implications for, performative accounts of state action in general. As political interventions, I will argue, such accounts in important ways participate in, rather than overturn, 'established modes of thought and action'; for example, by reinscribing world politics as a multinational space. As explanations, performative models of state action are undermined by the account of the social they presuppose. Failure adequately to locate the social contexts of the representational practices he examines makes it difficult for Campbell to offer a plausible account of their effects.[7]

Drawing on an historical materialist conception of the social and materialist feminist critiques of performativity, I argue for the necessity of a 'global social analytic'.[8] Historical materialism does not offer answers that are given in theory and thus guaranteed in advance but instead prompts certain kinds of questions. Those questions derive from an account of the social—a contestable set of 'struggle concepts'—that points us towards the ways in which modes of subjectivity, social forms and global relations are bound up with but not reducible to the extraction of surplus value, the division of labour, and the increasingly ubiquitous reach of capital.[9] Locating the contexts of identity and determining the effects of representational practices entails examining their relationship with these and other social logics.

I begin with Campbell's performative account of subjectivity and then offer an extended commentary organized around the themes of change and continuity. In passing, I also offer a brief critique of Campbell's explanation for Western intervention in the Gulf War. I conclude with the broader implications of my argument.

Performing identity

Most accounts of foreign policy take for granted the existence of the state and see foreign policy as its actions. Campbell rejects both of these assumptions. In contrast, he is concerned to show how foreign policy is not simply the response of a pre-given subject, whether singular or plural, to its environment but the means through which

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[5] Gregor McLennan, 'Post-Marxism and the "Four Sins" of Modernist Theorizing', *New Left Review*, 218 (1996), p. 51.

[6] Gearoid Ó Tuathail, 'Review Essay: Dissident IR and the Identity Politics Narrative', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 15 (1996), p. 647; Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., pp. 216, n. 36; 224. See also Weber, 'Performative States', p. 90.

[7] See Ó Tuathail, 'Review Essay: Dissident IR and the Identity Politics Narrative', and 'The Patterned Mess of History and the Writing of Critical Geopolitics: A Reply to Dalby', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 15 (1996), pp. 661–5.

[8] Rosemary Hennessy, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), p. 15. On historical materialism, see Frederic Jameson, 'Actually Existing Marxism', in Saree Makdisi, Cesare Casarino, and Rebecca E. Karl (eds.), *Marxism Beyond Marxism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[9] Rosemary Hennessy, 'Queer Theory, Left Politics', in Makdisi, Casarino, and Karl (eds.), *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, p. 219. This is clear in non-European contexts; see Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Marx After Marxism: History, Subalternity, and Difference', in *Marxism Beyond Marxism*.

a particular mode of subjectivity is reproduced.[10] State practices of representation—dubbed by Campbell Foreign Policy—constitute the sovereign identity (e.g. the United States) in whose name they claim to speak. Campbell distinguishes 'Foreign Policy' from 'foreign policy', which he defines as the discursive economy or conventional matrix of representations of otherness available within a particular place. The discursive economy (foreign policy) is the condition of possibility for state representations (Foreign Policy). Foreign Policy on this view is a specific kind of boundary-producing political performance that draws upon available modes of representation in order to reproduce a particular mode of subjectivity.[11] Foreign Policy is thus retheorized as one of the boundary-producing practices through which the United States, for example, is performatively reproduced as a subject of global political life.[12]

In reworking conventional understandings of what foreign policy is and what it does, Campbell draws on Judith Butler's notion of performativity and uses it to distinguish between his own work and that of others who have sought to understand foreign policy and state action in terms of identity.[13] Initially articulated as a critique of compulsory heterosexuality within feminism, the notion of performativity is best understood as an attempt to avoid two forms of reductionism: on the one hand, a metaphysical voluntarism that makes agency an unexplained attribute of the sovereign subject, and on the other, a fatalistic determinism that sees the subject as completely determined by social context.[14] While acknowledging the social construction of gender, Butler is also concerned about the politically disabling consequences of theories of social determination. Her aim is therefore both to recognize that the subject is socially constructed and, at the same time, to argue that this does not mean the erasure of agency. Butler seeks to open up a space for agency through the notion of the performative, an act 'which brings into being or enacts that which it names …. To the extent that a performative appears to "express" a prior intention, a doer *behind* the deed, that prior agency is only legible *as the effect* of that utterance'.[15] Subjects do not exist somehow behind or outside discourse but are constituted in and through it. Performativity is the 'vehicle through which ontological effects [such as the effect of a doer behind the deed] are established'.[16] At the same time, this constitution is 'an activity not an act; the subject is not a final product but an ongoing, always incomplete series of effects of a process of reiteration'.[17] The possibility that a particular form of subjectivity will not be reproduced is built into the notion of performativity.

[10] Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., p. x and 'Epilogue'; cf. Richard Devetak, 'Incomplete States: Theories and Practices of Statecraft', in John MacMillan and Andrew Linklater (eds.), *Boundaries in Question: New Directions in International Relations* (London: Pinter, 1995).
[11] Richard Ashley, 'Foreign Policy as a Political Performance', *International Studies Notes*, 13 (1987), pp. 51–4.
[12] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 75.
[13] For example, Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., pp. 222–5; cf. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993); *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[14] Peter Osborne (ed.), *A Critical Sense: Interviews with Intellectuals* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 110.
[15] Judith Butler, 'For a Careful Reading', in Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell, and Nancy Fraser, *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 134.
[16] Butler, quoted in Osborne, *A Critical Sense*, p. 112.
[17] Kathi Weeks, 'Subject for a Feminist Standpoint', in Makdisi, Casarino, and Karl (eds.), *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, p. 94.

Contrary to some voluntarist misreadings (deriving from an equation of 'performative' with 'performance') of the initial articulation of her position in *Gender Trouble* as implying that gender was radically free, Butler argues that this is not the case. Rather, performativity implies a kind of compulsory reiteration of those norms through which a subject is constituted: 'The "performative" dimension of construction is precisely the *forced* reiteration of norms'.[18] Agency is then located in the possibility for variation on that reiteration through resignification.[19] The notion of a performative is defined in relation to linguistic conventions: the model is the practice of citing in legal practice.[20] Linguistic here does not mean mere words; by signification Butler means not just 'how it is that certain signifiers come to mean what they mean, but how certain discursive forms articulate objects and subjects in their intelligibility'.[21] Reiteration is compulsory, but agency lies in the possibility of resignification, i.e. the reworking of the discourse through which subject effects are produced.

Campbell's reliance on Butler is explicit. For example, he rejects efforts to link the performative constitution of identity with some pre-given subject, such as state officials.[22] Foreign Policy is not just a ruse or a cover for the interests and power of dominant coalitions, as Ashley once suggested,[23] nor is it traceable to the acts of state officials conceived of as founding subjects: there is no doer behind the deed. Instead, as a subject of world politics the US is (just) an unstable effect of power, reproduced in the 'reiterated acting' that 'repeats and mimes' the discursive gestures of power, i.e. the modes of representation and techniques of differentiation that constitute Foreign Policy.

What, then, does it mean performatively to produce the US and how does this relate to state action? Campbell argues that subjectivity is effected through state representational practices that serve to align various other practices and diverse domains. In so doing, they constitute an imagined community, and bring into being an inside and an outside, a domestic and a foreign, and 'their associated figurations'.[24] Central to Campbell's understanding of identity is the nation, understood not as a founding essence of the *nation-state*—'national states whose sovereign territoriality is perfectly aligned with a prior and primary form of identification'— but as an effect of the representational practices of *national states*—'unavoidably paradoxical entities which do not possess prediscursive, stable identities'.[25] Campbell here runs together the state as structure of authority and the nation as imagined

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[18] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 94; emphasis added.

[19] Butler, 'For a Careful Reading', p. 135.

[20] For instance, Butler equates performativity with 'citationality' and illustrates her argument by reference to 'the judge who … invariably *cites* the law that he applies' thereby giving the performative 'its binding or conferring power'; *Bodies That Matter*, pp. 21, 225.

[21] Butler, 'For a Careful Reading', p. 138.

[22] Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., p. 224, quoting Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 225. See also *Writing Security*, revised edn., pp. 9–10; Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 24–5; cf. Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999), pp. 107–9.

[23] Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organization*, 38 (1984), p. 239.

[24] Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., p. 208.

[25] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 11.

community although elsewhere he distinguishes between them.[26] Effectively equated with all states, national states are constituted as incomplete and 'in permanent need of reproduction …. For a state to end its practices of representation would be to expose its lack of prediscursive foundations; stasis would be death'.[27] This claim is both a direct corollary of the position from which Campbell writes, as well as a substantive claim about state practice. Foreign Policy is a response to the necessity stemming from the paradox inherent in the being of national states that renders them in permanent need of reproduction. State action, then, is accounted for by reference to representational practices that *must* be redeployed in order to reproduce and secure a particular mode of subjectivity. The social—national states and other subjectivities—is here constituted primarily through a set of representational practices. Stated otherwise, the master concept in Campbell's conception of the social is signification.[28]

This is apparent in Campbell's explanations of Western intervention in the Gulf War with Iraq and of the long delayed intervention in Bosnia, which stress representational practices and their implications for the reproduction of a particular mode of subjectivity.[29] Campbell's performative account of the relationship between subjectivity and state action (i.e. intervention and non-intervention) is organized around two norms: the norm of sovereignty and the norm of cultural and territorial alignment, which Campbell also refers to as the nationalist imaginary. These norms exist in a hierarchical relationship: sovereignty trumps or sets an outer limit on the norm of cultural and territorial alignment. Campbell defines Foreign Policy as 'global in scope but national in legitimation' and argues that it 'serves to *reproduce* the constitution of identity made possible by foreign policy and its linkage with "external" threats, and to *contain* challenges to the identity that results'.[30] This makes the national imaginary integral to state action. State action is both made possible by and in turn constrained by the limits within which the national can be articulated. In the case of Bosnia, for example, it proved impossible to articulate US identity with a defence of multiculturalism; therefore, intervention initially did not take place. In the case of Iraq, issues of cultural and territorial alignment did not come up because the invasion was 'enframed' as an obvious violation of the norm of sovereignty.[31]

Campbell's account of the ways in which state practices of representation constitute the sovereign identity in whose name they claim to speak is integrally related to his explanations of state action: decentering the subject does not preclude explaining state action. Drawing on a broadly historical materialist perspective on world politics, I turn now to a consideration of Campbell's work both as a political inter-

[26] For instance, he refers to states as imagined communities; 'Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility', in Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds.), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996), p. 166.

[27] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 11.

[28] Teresa Ebert makes this observation of Laclau and Mouffe in her '(Untimely) Critiques for a *Red Feminism*', in Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, Teresa L. Ebert, and Donald Morton (eds.), *Post-Ality: Marxism and Postmodernism* (Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1995). See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985); cf. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, p. 25.

[29] David Campbell, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1993); 'Violent Performances', pp. 174–5.

[30] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 77; 'Violent Performances', p. 170.

[31] Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, pp. 170, 249, n. 3; 'Violent Performances', p. 175.

vention and as an explanation and argue that, on both counts, it has significant drawbacks. Those drawbacks have their common source in a questionable account of the social and become apparent if we examine his writings with an eye to issues of continuity and change. Post-structural scholars (and many others) claim that we live in a period of dramatic and profound change.[32] But performative accounts of subjectivity often emphasize the reproduction of the self. The seeming tension between these two positions offers a place to begin in analysing the politics of performativity.

Problematics of change and continuity

Change

World politics, asserts Campbell, is now characterized by flux and uncertainty. He is unequivocal about both the fact of these changes and their significance: 'This is what is going on in our world, and this is what we need to understand'.[33] This flux and uncertainty has in turn produced a crisis of representation.[34] The dominant modes of representation deployed within International Relations are inadequate

to understanding global life given the increasing irruptions of accelerated and nonterritorial contingencies upon our political horizons, irruptions in which a disparate but powerful assemblage of flows—flows of people, goods, money, ecological factors, disease, ideas, etc.— contest borders, put states into question (without rendering them irrelevant), rearticulate spaces, and reform identities.[35]

Campbell instead calls for a political prosaics—a 'philosophical anthropology of everyday life on a global scale' organized around 'transversal struggles', i.e. struggles over boundaries. The necessity of an alternative to existing modes of representation is framed against the assumption that we are living in a 'postmodern time'.[36] That time has its origins in a set of 'increasingly transnational transformations' and has recently been framed by Campbell in terms of '[t]he contingency and flux of the post-cold war period'.[37]

   In making these claims, Campbell forgets Foucault's observation that the *assumption* of change is 'one of the most harmful habits in contemporary

[32] Christine Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 14; George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, pp. 1–3.

[33] David Campbell, 'Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination', *Millennium* 23 (1994), p. 368.

[34] This claim is widespread and persistent. For example, it is also made by US state actors: see Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995). In 1988, Richard Ashley claimed that the rise of non-state actors, amongst other things, had led to a 'global crisis of representation'; 'Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique', *Millennium*, 17 (1988), p. 225.

[35] David Campbell, 'Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics and the Anarchical World', in Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds.), *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 9.

[36] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', pp. 23–4, 19.

[37] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', p. 9; *Writing Security*, revised edn., p. 209; cf. 'Cold Wars: Securing Identity, Identifying Danger', in Frederick M. Dolan and Thomas L. Dumm (eds.), *Rhetorical Republic: Governing Representations in American Politics* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), p. 43 on cold war as 'an orientation toward difference'.

thought'.[38] Such claims may reflect real change but they may also reflect 'our vulnerability to the assumption that our time is somehow special or different, a turning point, a moment radically disrupted by forms of social, cultural, economic, and political change'.[39] Moreover, the assertion of change participates in the project of bringing that change into being and obscures or denies the existence of continuities across the alleged divide.[40] Despite the rapidity with which it has become an element of disciplinary and popular commonsense, the claim that the end of the Cold War represents a fundamental change in world politics remains contentious.[41] Reading world politics through a Cold War narrative assumes that the dominant dramas of world politics prior to 1989 were those associated with the US–Soviet conflict rather than, say, North-South relations in the context of decolonization or the defence and expansion of a capitalist world economy, by US state actors amongst others.[42] These relations are persistent. The claim that the world is changed, whether as a result of the end of the Cold War or of something else, is both interested and contestable.

The contestable nature of the assumption of dramatic change prompts us to ask why change has occurred and why it has occurred now, particularly given Campbell's commitment to a performative view of subjectivity in which identities are always unstable and in doubt. Campbell's answer, beyond pointing to the 'end of the Cold War', is to allude to a 'powerful assemblage of flows' and to 'chronoeconomic processes' which presumably mark and so constitute the post-Cold War period.[43] Change is taken for granted as a new fact of global political life and used to motivate the call for a political prosaics.

An alternative account of 'our postmodern time' is offered by the internationalization of capital.[44] Contrasting Campbell's political prosaics focusing on transversal struggles with an historical materialist account of the internationalization of capital highlights the politics of his intervention, and in particular the questionable conception of the social it deploys. Within such an account, the Cold War is framed as a regional rather than a world-defining conflict, a view held also by many newly-independent states in the wake of colonialism.[45] Agency is displaced from the US and the Soviet Union to the self-expansion of capital on a world scale and its implications for the transformation of existing social relations and subjectivities: capital 'transforms what it inherits'.[46] Accumulation in the context of a world

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[38] Michel Foucault, 'Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview', *Telos*, 55 (1983), p. 206.

[39] Barry Smart, *Modern Conditions, Postmodern Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 5.

[40] Paul Smith, *Millennial Dreams: Contemporary Culture and Capital in the North* (London: Verso, 1997) is an extended treatment of this theme.

[41] For an argument that the Cold War has not ended, see Robert Cox with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 34.

[42] On the former, see Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1994 [1992]); on the latter, see Bruce Cumings, ' "Revising Postrevisionism", or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History', *Diplomatic History*, 17 (1993), pp. 539–69.

[43] 'Political Prosaics', p. 9; *Politics Without Principle*, p. 84; cf. Michael Shapiro, 'Sovereignty and Exchange in the Orders of Modernity', *Alternatives*, 16 (1991), pp. 447–77.

[44] The internationalization of capital is prominent in the work of those Marxist-inspired scholars such as Mike Davis, David Harvey and Frederic Jameson on whom Campbell has drawn in seeking to think through 'the condition of postmodernity' but is invisible in his own work; see 'Political Prosaics,' p. 25, n. 15.

[45] Ahmad, *In Theory*, 'Introduction'.

[46] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 142.

market means extension of the competitive process of standardization and differentiation—and as a result the creative destruction typical of capitalism—to a progressively greater part of the earth's surface and to an ever-increasing number of social domains.[47]

Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.[48]

There is nothing postmodern about flux, change and uncertainty; they are integral to capitalism. Historical materialist accounts of the internationalization of capital enable us to get beyond the assumption of change to consider its sources and its nature.

Significantly, Campbell rejects efforts to link capital with the production of 'our postmodern time.' He does so in two ways. First, Campbell defines identity as distinct from and in opposition to capital. For example, in dismissing as totalizing Rosenberg's call for analysis of capital as the structuring principle of modernity, Campbell claims that 'focusing on [global capital] alone pays little if any of the necessary attention to *other practices*, most notably *the question of identity*'.[49] But even on its own terms, Rosenberg's classical Marxist argument implicates questions of identity and the practices through which identities are produced, albeit not the forms of identity that most interest Campbell, whose aversion to locating representations in the context of a world economy is here sharply in view.[50] Moreover, assuming the separation of capital and identity disables criticism by obscuring the ways in which the agency of capital is 'immanent within culture'.[51]

The opposition between capital and identity highlights the extent to which identity for Campbell refers to *national* identity, an impression reinforced by his claims that states are always national states, and that in the absence of an 'external' threat symbolic struggles over the meaning of 'America' play 'an integral role in the constitution of the state'.[52] Campbell rejects analysis of capital and reinscribes a view of world politics as a multi-national space as the point of departure for critical analysis. Why? Because to a greater degree than other forms of community, 'the nationalist imaginary … demands a violent relationship with the other'.[53] The antipathy towards the nation evident in Campbell's work is, in common with the assumption of change, politically interested. As Ahmad points out, 'a blanket contempt for all nationalisms tends to slide over the question of imperialism …

[47] Rhys Jenkins, *Transnational Corporations and Uneven Development: The Internationalization of Capital and the Third World* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 34–5.

[48] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988), p. 212.

[49] Campbell, 'Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination', p. 369; emphasis added. Justin Rosenberg, 'The International Imagination: IR Theory and Classic Social Analysis', *Millennium*, 23 (1994), pp. 85–108.

[50] For two sophisticated treatments of these issues, see Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini (eds.), *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), and Allan Pred and Michael John Watts, *Reworking Modernity: Capitalisms and Symbolic Discontent* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[51] Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 356.

[52] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 11; 'Violent Performances', p. 169.

[53] Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, p. 13.

Historically, nationalism has often played a progressive role in opposition to colonial conquest …'.[54] Campbell's comments need to be read in the light of the ways in which the mobilization of national identity, whatever its other effects, constitutes a resource against imperialism. In this respect, Campbell's work participates, against his desire, in contemporary efforts to rework the nation-state in the service of the internationalization of capital. The nation *itself* is seen as the primary obstacle to progressive change, whether to greater recognition of our interdependence with the other or to the kind of borderless world dreamed of by capital and its acolytes.

Second, Campbell also dismisses the argument that capital plays a central role in the production of postmodernity by linking it with the sovereignty problematic.[55] Instead of engaging with the substance of the argument, Campbell claims it is invalid because it rests on discredited metatheoretical assumptions.[56] For example, Jameson's argument that postmodernism is the cultural logic of late capitalism, claims Campbell, relies on 'an economistic conception of power, whereby power is regarded as a commodity to be wielded by agents. Such a perspective is, however, wholly inadequate as a basis for understanding our postmodern time'.[57] Similarly, Campbell's response to Rosenberg's counter-problematic of an historical sociology of modernity also questions the possibility of capital's agency.[58] Instead, Campbell asserts that

The challenge for a mode of representation adequate to our postmodern times is ... to articulate an understanding of world politics attuned to the need to move beyond the sovereignty problematic, with its focus on geopolitical segmentarity, settled subjects, and economistic power, that appreciates the significance of flows, networks, webs, and the identity formations located therein ....[59]

Campbell rejects efforts to link postmodernity with the logics of capital accumulation and instead locates the motor of change in vaguely defined 'irruptions', 'flows', and 'postmodern power'. [60]

The rhetorical strategy at work here reveals that Marxism is the 'Other' through which Campbell's own subject position is affirmed. Campbell fails to acknowledge difference (e.g. the existence of multiple Marxisms) or his responsibility to the Other (e.g. Foucault's negative dependence on Althusser).[61] Instead, his rhetorical strategy constructs a monolithic Marxism, the characteristics of which—agents, centres, boundaries, certainty, multinational spaces, capital, and economistic notions of power located somewhere—negatively define Campbell's own position—decentered subjects, networks, flows, uncertainty, transversal struggles, identity, and a postmodern notion of power located everywhere. But this rhetorical strategy misses

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[54] Ahmad, quoted in Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster (eds.), *In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), pp. 54, 55; but cf. Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 317.

[55] On the sovereignty problematic, see George, *Discourses of Global Politics*, p. 201.

[56] Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., pp. 210–15, esp. 214.

[57] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', p. 18; Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

[58] Campbell, 'Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination', p. 369.

[59] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', p. 19.

[60] Ibid., p. 18.

[61] See, respectively, Terrell Carver, *The Postmodern Marx* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) and Robert Paul Resch, *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

its target: the charge that historical materalism is disabled by a commitment to the sovereignty problematic is false. Campbell confuses the universalizing of *totalizing theories* with materialist analyses of capitalism—and feminist analyses of patri-archy—as *social totalities*. His target is an expressive or Hegelian totality wherein the various elements of a social formation are assumed to derive from a common source or to be explicable in terms of a single cause. This notion of totality has been under Marxist attack, most famously by Althusser, since the early 60s. To invoke the language of totality now is instead to make a more limited but also a more telling claim.

It is politically to recognize that some social relations, while always being historically and differentially inflected, have the status of 'social totalities' in that they have persistently (though never absolutely or in any monocausal way) organized people's lives across social formations and specific situations. Among these are capital's extraction of surplus labour, imperialism's tactics of eminent domain and white supremacy, and patriarchal gender hierarchies.[62]

Historical materialism does not assume that the real is reducible to class but instead argues that there exist social totalities, one of which is capitalism, and that diverse practices and spaces are articulated with and shaped by it. This is of course a contestable claim. What is important here is the way in which such claims intervene in reality, their political effects and explanatory power.

The key question is: how should we represent this new 'postmodern' world politics, after the Cold War and beyond the sovereignty problematic? And what are the effects of our representations? According to Campbell,

the anarchical condition of postmodern, globalized life is better represented as a series of *transversal struggles* rather than as a complex of inter-*national*, multi-*national*, or trans-*national* relations, because of their being modes of representation that have powerful investments in the very borders being questioned.[63]

Campbell foregrounds the nation in framing his call for a political prosaics. That call participates in contemporary claims about the end of Marxism and goes hand in hand with the rejection of capital as a meaningful global social relation.[64] Campbell opens his reflections on the place of the state in postmodern world politics by invoking Salgado's photographs of workers in order to reject such representations, thereby denying that there is anything systematic about the relations between and among these labouring subjects, their struggles, and their participation in the world economy.[65] Instead, there are only 'networks,' a concept Campbell tentatively endorses because it 'is more supple than the notion of system, more historical than the notion of structure, more empirical than the notion of complexity'.[66] The

[62] Hennessy, 'Queer Theory, Left Politics', p. 220. The classic statement is Louis Althusser, 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', in *For Marx*, translated by Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1977 [1965]).

[63] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', p. 24; emphasis added.

[64] John Maclean, 'The Ideology of the End of Marxism/End of Socialism Thesis: A Critical, Global Perspective', in Barbara Einhorn, Mary Kaldor, and Zdenek Kavan (eds.), *Citizenship and Democratic Control in Contemporary Europe* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 1996).

[65] Campbell, 'Political Prosaics', pp. 7–9; Sebastiao Salgado, *An Uncertain Grace* (New York: Aperture, 1990), and *Workers: An Archeology of the Industrial Age* (New York: Aperture, 1993).

[66] Campbell, 'Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination', p. 367; quoting Bruno Latour; see also *Politics Without Principle*, p. 27.

difficulty with this position from an historical materialist point of view is that it obscures the systemic nature of global capitalism and replicates a liberal notion of global capitalism as economic relations (i.e. economic 'networks'). But as Hitchcock argues, 'the diversity of local strategies of late capitalism underlines rather than negates the necessity of a global critique'.[67] Such a critique is hamstrung by representions of world politics as made up of dispersed groups connected through 'networks,' a representation perilously close to that of capital itself.[68]

In contrast, historical and feminist materialists continue to find the concept of totality necessary, for both political and explanatory reasons. For example, Hennessy has called for a 'global social analytic' as a way of conceptualizing the social and a strategy of reading attentive to the 'contesting interests at stake in discursive constructions of the social'. She uses the notion of 'globality' in order to refer to 'two distinct yet interdetermined registers of social relations: the worldwide (global) reach of capital's markets, and a (global) mode of reading systemically' and contrasts a global analytic with regional modes of analysis. The latter are totalizing in the sense that they generalize 'a logic of the whole from that of a particular region' and so 'close off ways of explaining relations between spheres of social production. …' A global analytic foregrounds the necessity of examining the relations between and among different regions of the social: 'A global analytic posits the social not as a fixed or unified structure, but as an ensemble of relations in which connections between cultural, economic, and political practices are overdetermined'.[69]

Viewed through a global social analytic, Campbell's work emerges as a form of regional analysis: it generalizes from the logic of a particular region to the logic of the whole. Although Campbell does not attempt to reduce the social to a simple or unified structure, his analysis is totalizing because it assumes that signification is the logic of the social.[70] Campbell's position closes off analysis of the ways in which capital is implicated as a causal factor in the production of postmodernity, *even if* the sovereignty problematic is, well, problematic. The issue here is: for whom is sovereignty a problem and why? Sovereignty might be problematic now precisely because it is a problem for an increasingly transnational and global form of capital. What is at stake in the internationalization of capital is the simultaneous hollowing out of sovereignty and the reworking of state power.[71] This is readily apparent in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), for example. Moreover, decentered modes of subjectivity are functional for capital, particularly in the context of a

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[67] Peter Hitchcock, 'Workers of the World _____!', in Makdisi, Casarino, and Karl (eds.), *Marxism Beyond Marxism*, p. 72.

[68] For example, see 'The networked economy changes everything. Its arrival, the gurus say, should be like the transition from an agrarian economy to an industrial one', Bonus Section: Technology, *USA Today*, November 16, 1998, p. 1E. Campbell elsewhere describes 'the global corporation' as 'a node in a complex global enterprise web' and endorses Robert Reich's liberal account of it; see *Politics Without Principle*, pp. 86–7, and Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

[69] Hennessy, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse*, pp. 15–16.

[70] Compare Lawrence Grossberg, 'On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall', in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 145.

[71] For two quite different treatments of this theme, see Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), and Leo Panitch, 'Rethinking the Role of the State', in James H. Mittelman (ed.), *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

shifting global division of labour.[72] Campbell's position rules out this possibility in advance: his conception of the social and his interpretive strategies are thus revealed as forms of 'regionalism written large'.[73] This conception of the social, as I will now show, both underpins and undermines Campbell's performative accounts of the reproduction of state subjectivity and of state action.

Continuity

Writing Security, the work in which Campbell first offered a developed account of his position, offers a Foucauldian genealogy of the 'United States'. But *Writing Security* also constitutes a narrative, the subject of which is the discursive economy of identity/difference through which the 'United States' is produced as a subject of global life. Foreign Policy is implicated in this economy as a locus and means of its reproduction.[74] The economy of identity/difference is seemingly uncontested: no articulations of US state identity inconsistent with the subject of his narrative are presented.[75] Campbell implicitly links the lack of contestation to the fact that he focuses on representations that have been 'proffered by those with greater access to social resources', a group he equates with state officials, 'those acting in official capacities'. To offer a fuller treatment of the politics of subjectivity, 'Crudely put, one would have to consider the full range of popular resistances to elite practices …'.[76] Campbell's method reinscribes a view of politics as organized around a popular/elite distinction.

Despite being committed to the view that the production and reproduction of identity is an inherently unstable and never finished affair, Campbell offers a narrative in which the economy of identity/difference through which the US has been produced as a subject of world politics persists over a remarkably long period of time. One looks in vain for an explanation of why that economy is reproduced rather than transformed, beyond general remarks about the need for particular practices of representation in order to reproduce 'the United States'.[77] This is an assumption of the performative model itself: subjectivity just is contingent and must be endlessly reproduced. But merely because subjectivity requires to be reproduced through practice does not mean that it will be. Moreover, reproduction is contested: the reinscription of identity requires 'considerable effort,' and 'the logic and practice of identity for America has been sustained by the investment of social resources'.[78] Reference to 'struggles' and 'efforts' within this genealogy is however only a gesture: they are neither excavated nor does Campbell attempt to theorize them, and they have no discernible impact on the economy of identity/difference beyond generating

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[72] Hennessy, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse*, p. 9.

[73] Ibid., p. 16.

[74] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. 76.

[75] Iver B. Neumann, 'Self and Other in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996), pp. 158–60.

[76] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. viii.

[77] Specifically, Campbell locates the persistence of subjectivity over time in the logic of identity/difference itself. Because identity requires difference to be, the never-completed nature of subjectivity renders the state 'as an *impelling* identity'; *Writing Security*, p. 12; emphasis added.

[78] Campbell, *Writing Security*, pp. 156, 251, 257.

representational resources that can be deployed in the reproduction of the self. But if performativity opens up space for agency, if it acknowledges the possibility of reproductive failure, and if reproduction is contested, why is it that on inspection we find only the persistence of particular modes of subjectivity over time?

In analysing performative effects, Campbell focuses primarily on the reproduction of a particular mode of subjectivity and an associated economy of identity/difference. But according to Butler performative effects extend beyond this: the reproduction of heterosexuality, for instance, takes place through ritualized practices that 'sex' or materialize the body.[79] This process of materialization makes the reiteration of gender norms more likely by producing 'bodies that matter', where '"to matter" means at once "to materialize" and "to mean"'.[80] History—the reiteration of gender norms—acquires ontological weight through materializations and sedimentations that shape the body such as, under late capitalism, silicone breast implants and staying slim—or trying to—in order to 'get' and 'keep' a man.[81]

Butler's argument prompts us to look for analogous materializations and sedimentations that have accumulated as a result of the performative reproduction of US subjectivity, and their consequences for continuity or change. For example, the reproduction of US identity produces over time a landscape of institutions, apparatuses, and social relations. Those institutions and apparatuses—such as the Department of Defense and the other elements of the military-industrial complex and the national security state that emerged after World War II—enable and make more likely the reproduction of a particular construction of US subjectivity. This landscape is, in a sense, called into existence as a result of the repeated deployment of particular representations of US identity and in turn makes the reproduction of that identity more or less likely. The reproduction of the self could then be traced in part to the sheer weight and density of those accumulated institutions, apparatuses and relations. Despite occasional reference to various institutions and apparatuses, they are not integrated into Campbell's analysis in any systematic way. In both his and Butler's work, '[t]he relations between socioeconomic and political institutions on the one hand and everyday signifying practices on the other are invisible'.[82]

Recognizing that the performative reproduction of US subjectivity produces a shifting social landscape highlights Campbell's questionable account of the social. First, taking note of the shifting landscape materialized over time through Foreign Policy raises the issue of the ways in which particular subjects are differentially empowered in relation one to another by their location within it. If, as a result of Foreign Policy, there is produced not only a Department of Defense but also communities of 'downwinders' and Native Americans who have been sickened and diseased as a result of nuclear testing and working in uranium mines, it seems reasonable to ask how these different subjects are empowered in relation to each other, and the implications for the reproduction or the transformation of US

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[79] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 10; Osborne, *A Critical Sense*, pp. 112–3; cf. Campbell, *Writing Security*, revised edn., pp. 9–11 and 217–22.
[80] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 32.
[81] Compare Weeks, 'Subject for a Feminist Standpoint', pp. 96–9.
[82] Weeks, 'Subject for a Feminist Standpoint', pp. 95–6.

identity.[83] Campbell does not pursue this question because his commitment to a Foucauldian conception of power and the social apparently rules it out. Such a question would be dismissed as implicating an economistic conception of power, as if recognition of power's diverse forms means the analyst must choose one of them.[84] Campbell ignores the complications for his analysis stemming from recognition that other subjects too have 'greater access to social resources' but—as in the case of capital—are formally separate from those 'acting in official capacities'.[85]

Second, Butler's model equates reproduction with citationality. This obscures the relations between the multiple logics that constitute the social and their implications for the reproduction or transformation of subjectivity. The 'forced reiteration of [heterosexual] norms' is effected not only through practices of signification associated with the insitution of marriage, for example, but also through property relations associated with a gendered division of labour.[86] Applying this argument to Campbell's genealogy of the US offers a way of accounting for reproduction *and change* in US identity over time: reproduction is linked to the location of the US within a global division of labour that is itself subject to change as a result of the internationalization of capital. It also highlights the fact that Campbell's account of the social as determined through signification obscures analysis of this issue while also implicitly relying upon it. His claim that we are living in a 'postmodern time' does not systematically link our 'postmodern condition' to a shifting global division of labour; it either assumes such changes under the vague language of 'flows' and 'irruptions', or it obscures them by linking the 'contingency' of US identity to the 'end of the Cold War.' In contrast, an historical materialist account of the social foregrounds such issues: it poses as a central *question* the relationship between representational practices and socioeconomic relations, without arguing that the one is reducible to the other.[87]

These features of Campbell's account of the social undercut his efforts to explain state action. For example, Campbell makes strong claims about why the US and its allies intervened when Iraq invaded Kuwait: 'The war with Iraq revealed how orthodox international political practice is premised upon an ethical principle—the principle of sovereignty'.[88] Intervention against Iraq was made possible because that conflict could be 'enframed' as nothing other than a territorial invasion and hence a violation of sovereignty. The norm of sovereignty made intervention possible

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[83] See Mike Davis, 'The Dead West: Ecoside in Marlboro Country', *New Left Review*, 200 (1993), pp. 49–73; and Joseph Masco, 'States of Insecurity: Plutonium and Post-Cold War Anxiety in New Mexico, 1992–1996', in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson, and Raymond Duvall (eds.), *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[84] For example, Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures', in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980); cf. Nancy Fraser, 'Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions', in *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

[85] Campbell, *Writing Security*, p. viii. Compare Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986).

[86] Hennessy, 'Queer Theory, Left Politics'; cf. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 94.

[87] See Jameson, 'Actually Existing Marxism', and 'Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue', in Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds.), *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). See also David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

[88] Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, p. 82.

because it enabled the US and its allies to shore up their own subjectivities and to ascribe responsibility only to Iraq, thus licensing violence against the Other.[89] Campbell's only reference to the suggestion that US intervention was linked to oil is to observe that the significance of oil for the US is related to past energy policy: 'In the case of oil, the threat of an unfriendly hegemon in the Gulf is an issue for the United States principally because it has abandoned a national energy policy and doubled its reliance on imported oil in the past decade'.[90] This raises the question of just why the US has no such policy—although it overlooks the possibility that lack of an official policy might in fact *be* the policy—as well as the origins and implications of US dependence on 'foreign oil.' Campbell does not pursue such questions. Instead, he uses the observation that the US does not have a national energy policy further to motivate his larger point that the Self and the Other are mutually implicated and that therefore it is unethical to attribute evil only to the Other; we are both, Self and Other, responsible.

Campbell identifies a proximate condition of intervention—representation of the situation in the Gulf as a defence of sovereignty—but fails adequately to locate the social context of that representation. For instance, he misses the ways in which the norm of sovereignty is reworked by other sites of social power such as a global division of labour.[91] Campbell does not trace out a genealogy of US and Western representations of oil, and of oil in relation to the Middle East as a region, of the kind that he offers for the Iraq-Kuwait border, for example. Instead he attributes intervention to the norm of sovereignty alone and ignores the ways in which other social logics such as those associated with the world oil market or the ways in which the US constituted force beyond its borders are articulated with it.[92] To understand the relative significance of sovereignty and oil for the decision to intervene against Iraq requires both a detailed reconstruction of the relations between the security apparatus of the US state and those of client regimes such as Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, as well as a reconstruction of the world oil market and its relation to US hegemony. Regimes such as Iran under the Shah or Iraq under Saddam Hussein laid claim to sovereignty in their region but evident in their dealings with the US is a more complicated relation with that norm. The Shah, for example, mounted the Peacock Throne partly as the result of a CIA-backed coup against Mossadegh.[93] One reason for US interest in the region and its repeated violation of local sovereignties was the strategic role of oil in the world economy. It was recognition of this role that led Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 to draw 'a rough sketch' of the Middle East for the British ambassador Lord Halifax: 'Persian oil,' he told the Ambassador, 'is yours. We share the oil for Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it is

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[89] Campbell, 'Violent Performances', p. 175.

[90] Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, p. 79; cf. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), pp. 305ff.

[91] Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney, 'Realizing Sovereignty', *Review of International Studies*, 21 (1995), pp. 3–20.

[92] See, for example, Simon Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil: The Industry, the State System and the World Economy* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); and Tarak Barkawi, 'War Inside the Free World: The US and the Cold War in the Third World', in Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (eds.), *Democracy, Liberalism and War: Rethinking the Democratic Peace Debate* (Unpublished MS, 2000).

[93] Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy 1945–1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), pp. 72–7.

ours'.[94] Failure to explore these other social relations, in part because of a (selective) fixation on sovereignty and the national, leaves Campbell unable to identify the effects of representations of the Gulf War—by US state managers and others—as a defence of the norm of sovereignty. This renders his explanation partial and unpersuasive.

Conclusion

As a political intervention, Campbell's work erases both capital and labour and reinscribes conventional distinctions between politics and economics and between capital and the nation. The framing for his entire critical project is a representation of world politics as a multi-national space. As an explanatory intervention, his performative account of state action is disabled by a questionable account of the social. Despite these shortcomings, Campbell's call for a political prosaics contains within it the potential for recognizing both the political and the explanatory necessity of acknowledging the existence of multiple logics in the constitution of the social. Articulation of women's oppression as a global phenomenon has long forced feminists to grapple with how one might conceptualize relations between and amongst sets of widely dispersed and seemingly disparate practices that nonetheless participated—*despite* their diverse forms and character—in the reproduction of patriarchy as a *global* social relation. A similar logic drives historical materialism. The formative dependence of feminism and historical materialism as self-consciously emancipatory political projects—grounded in the everyday experiences of women and workers, and charged with speaking for and to those circumstances in which these subjects find themselves—persistently raises questions about the status of the material and of the relationship between representations and lived realities.[95] Totality emerges out of these shared emancipatory interests and does so as a political and explanatory necessity. In contrast, performative accounts of subjectivity begin and end with representation, with a social logic of signification. This emphasis has produced significant insights into world politics and opened up new possibilities for how we understand and conceive of subjectivity and agency. But making good on the political and emancipatory interest evident in Campbell's call for a political prosaics requires recognition that the social is constituted through multiple logics. A crucial task for analysis, therefore, is to adopt a global social analytic (or something like it) in order to grasp the ways in which multiple logics—including capitalist ones—are articulated together in the production of world politics. Otherwise, our analyses—like Campbell's—will wind up reproducing the very realities that they desire to transform.

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[94] Quoted in Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), p. 401.
[95] See, for example, Ebert, '(Untimely) Critiques for a *Red Feminism*', pp. 116ff.