

Transgressing Boundaries: Theories of Knowledge, Gender and International Relations

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It is periodically incumbent on a discipline to review the ideas that it has found useful in the past, and to reconsider if they will serve its purposes in the future.¹

Theories of knowledge, gender, and international relations draw boundaries that define categories of thought and conceptual frameworks and marking who asks what questions and how answers are sought. In general, we mark boundaries by specifying the distinction they 'draw': subject from object, men from women, North from South. Yet boundaries are historical: they are imposed as contingent practices, not discovered as transcendent 'givens'. As social constructions, they can be deconstructed, disrupted and transgressed. This paper discusses the ways in which post-positivist and feminist critiques challenge and transform boundaries drawn by mainstream approaches.

Destabilized boundaries and their complications seem particularly characteristic of the late twentieth century. The boundary project of conventional positivist science is being challenged by a series of powerful critiques, variously called interpretation, critical social theory, post-structuralism or post-modernism.²

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1. Eric R. Wolf, 'The Vicissitudes of the Closed Corporate Peasant Community', *American Ethnologist* (Vol. 13, No. 2, 1986), p. 325.

2. I define positivism minimally, as a categorical separation of subject-object and fact-value premised upon a correspondence theory of truth. Because I am focusing on commonalities rather than diversity, 'post-positivism' in this paper refers to the multiple critiques that reject these dichotomies and their metaphysics. In fact, most contemporary scholars acknowledge that the process of inquiry is socially embedded and that absolute distinctions between subject and object and between fact and value cannot be sustained. However, the implications of this acknowledgment remain unclear, generating the debates focused on in this paper. Because the implications are not agreed upon and the dialogue remains so stunted, I am less interested in who is or is not a post-positivist and more interested in how these critical debates are framed, what is at stake, and what is impeding more effective dialogue. I am arguing against and attempting to demonstrate the persistent effects of thinking and living dichotomously. My generic reference to post-positivists – drawing a distinction between positivists and all 'others' – would seem to replicate the dualizing moves I am criticizing. However, as I hope to clarify in this essay, once the 'form' of dichotomies (imposed by objectivist metaphysics) is challenged, the meaning of the terms is no longer bounded by opposition. This applies to positivism and post-positivism, modern and post-modern, masculine and feminine, reform and revolution. Post-positivism is not a rejection of everything preceding it but an insistence on seeing 'objects', and the boundaries constituting them, in relation. This insistence on relational thinking acknowledges continuities as well as contradictions.

Masculine hegemony is being disrupted by shifting divisions of labour, reconfigured sexual identities, and the pressure of feminist critiques. The world's political landscape is being transformed, as disintegration and integration, such as sub-nationalist movements and the development of the European Community, alter territorial boundaries and group identities. In this context, theories of international relations must address not only the shifting political terrain, but also the demands for new mapping practices raised by critiques of positivism and gender hierarchy.

Post-positivist and feminist critiques are increasingly transgressing the boundaries imposed in conventional international relations. They are expanding the margins without, however, significantly affecting the centre. For those who identify with the centre, the implications of these critiques for international relations remain unclear and the lack of effective dialogue between centre and margin fuels confusion about and resistance to post-positivist and feminist movements. This paper attempts to improve the dialogue – and engage more voices in it – by clarifying these critiques and their implications. I examine some of the boundaries shared by positivist science, gender hierarchy and international relations theory in order to facilitate new mapping practices and open new conversational spaces. Resiting inherited boundaries reveals some of what is at stake for international relations in taking post-positivist and feminist critiques seriously.

The first section discusses the 'third debate' in international relations as metatheoretical terrain where positivism and international relations theory share important boundaries. After reviewing what the debate is about, I argue that critiques of positivism are inadequately addressed in international relations. I then suggest why we lack constructive dialogue on these issues and attempt to further the dialogue by examining some of the responses to post-positivism. I consider feminist theories of gender hierarchy, why they are relevant to international relations, how their claims – and especially their transformational implications – have been marginalized, and how gender-sensitive international relations theory might be mapped. Sketching familiar conversations in relation to unfamiliar feminist contributions clarifies what is at stake – for both post-positivism and international relations – in 'taking gender seriously'.

The 'Third' Debate in International Relations Theory

Students of international relations are familiar with the field's earlier debates pitting realism against idealism and traditionalism and history against behaviouralism. In a 1989 issue of *International Studies Quarterly*, Yosef Lapid argued that international relations theorists are now engaged in a third discipline-defining debate generated by an alleged collapse of confidence in empiricist-positivism.³ At issue are not just particular schools of thought but

3. See Yosef Lapid, 'The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a

metatheoretical questions about the nature of thought and theorizing itself. International relations theorists are thus questioning 'the nature of our social knowledge, its acquisition, and its utility'⁴ and re-examining how the discipline constructs itself and its theorizing. According to Lapid 'the third debate marks a clear end to the positivist epistemological consensus'.⁵ While the third debate does mark an intellectual transition involving critiques of positivism, the centre of international relations is not engaging in a debate with marginalized voices. Insofar as the lack of dialogue between centre and margins is due to confusion and miscommunication, it is helpful to clarify here what is meant by positivist epistemology and what is implied by its demise.

By Lapid's account, the current debate re-examines our 'foundations' or metatheoretical positions, understood as 'highly prized premises of Western academic discourse...including shibboleths such as "truth," "rationality," and "objectivity"'.⁶ At stake in the current debate, therefore, are not isolated beliefs or particular theories but our 'foundations': the objectivist metaphysics presupposed in conventional accounts of knowledge, whether these are labelled instrumentalism, empiricist-positivism, Enlightenment rationality, or logocentrism. This metaphysics centres on 'the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness'.⁷ This categorial framework – ostensibly corresponding to an objective reality existing independent of subjectivity – establishes foundational meanings and permits the grounding of knowledge claims.

What is most familiar about this metaphysics is its binary logic, which engenders Western philosophy's characteristic dualisms. Post-positivists criticize this 'structuring of paired opposites' that 'at once differentiates one term from another, prefers one to the other, and arranges them hierarchically, displacing the subordinate term beyond the boundary of what is significant and desirable'.⁸

Post-positivist Era', *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 33, No. 3, September 1989), pp. 235-54.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 238. To the extent that the discipline's 'paradigms' – realism, neorealism, pluralism, structuralism – retain positivist epistemologies, all are subject to transformation in light of metatheoretical challenges.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

7. See Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), p. 8, in reference to 'objectivism'. This set of beliefs is also referred to as the philosophy of identity, logic of identity and difference, and/or the metaphysics of presence.

8. Donna Gregory, 'Foreword', in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds), *International/Intertextual Relations* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), p. xvi; see also Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Anthony Wilden, *Man and Woman, War and Peace* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); Richard Ashley, 'Living on Borderlines' in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds), *International/Intertextual Relations* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989), pp. 259-321; and Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

Hierarchical dichotomies profoundly shaping Western thought and practice include: culture–nature, mind–body, reason–affect, subject–object, fact–value, self–other, order–anarchy, and masculine–feminine.

Whatever else differentiates the variety of post-positivist contributions, they share a critique of Western philosophy's binary forms, particularly the categorical separation of subject from object and fact from value characterizing positivist knowledge claims. If the third debate is about taking post-positivism seriously, it is also about freeing ourselves from the grip of binary thinking.

Why is Post-Positivism Important for International Relations?

The lack of dialogue between margin and centre may suggest to some that critiques of positivism have little relevance to mainstream international relations. On the contrary, these critiques are of crucial relevance to the both the conceptualization and practice of international relations. There are several reasons for taking post-positivism seriously and for engaging more international relations scholars in metatheoretical debates.

First, developments in the philosophy of science, where positivism has been the target of rigorous critique, compel our attention. The positivist model has been challenged by developments 'internal' to science itself (the movement from Newtonian mechanics to relativity and quantum physics) and by sociologies of knowledge that establish the interaction of knowledge claims and socio-political relations. Kuhnian sociologies of science, critical social theory, and post-structuralist examinations of power converge in calling into question categorical distinctions between subject and object, fact and value. To remain disengaged from these debates, and their implications for theory and practice, is to deny the significance of underlying assumptions and their impact on our thought and practice.

Second, rapidly changing world events are not adequately addressed by prevailing theories in international relations. Processes of integration and disintegration challenge conventional accounts of sovereignty. Global economic and ecological crises cannot be addressed by state-centric decision-making. Non-state actors powerfully shape national economies. And new social movements demand more than the absence of war: they raise deeper questions about the nature of power and the meaning of human community. In this context, international relations accounts reveal themselves to be practically and theoretically inadequate. New understanding – generated in part by re-examining conventional givens – and new vision are required. Post-positivist critiques do not offer 'the answer' but insist upon and provide new spaces for the rethinking required 'to deal with the enormous issues of praxis that we confront in global life.'⁹

9. Jim George and David Campbell, 'Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference', *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 34, No. 3, 1990), p. 289.

Third, post-positivist critiques are already transgressing conventional boundaries and the centre is ill-served by its inattention to the issues raised. As Pauline Rosenau remarks, 'All the signs indicate that post-modernist and post-structuralist approaches are gaining momentum'.¹⁰ Moreover, evidence suggests that critiques of positivism are not fading but increasing in significance, both inside and outside of international relations. To ignore or deny these critical voices is counter-productive: it disables dialogue that is crucial to both centre and margin. It also continues a regrettable tradition of philosophical naivete in international relations.¹¹

If, as this discussion suggests, post-positivism is so important for international relations, why does engagement in the third debate seem so limited and unproductive? The nature of the debate itself poses particular problems because post-positivism raises challenges that cannot be addressed piecemeal but require fundamental transformations in how we understand 'reality'. Successful communication, in this case between centre and margin, either requires mutual understanding of terms and constructs, or successful translation that enables such understanding – a requirement difficult to meet where the meaning of conventional terms and 'mutual understanding' is part of what is in question. Not surprisingly, the debate has been marked by failures of communication as centrists and dissidents often talk past each other.

Moreover, lack of familiarity with broader epistemological debates exacerbates a tendency to perceive post-positivist arguments as incoherent or irrelevant. The scale and complexity of what is at stake may invite disbelief ('the challenge is unintelligible or overstated'), disdain ('this is irrelevant to the 'real' work of international relations'), and/or distrust ('surrendering empirical and evaluative grounds is too dangerous'). As long as marginal terrain is seen as incoherent, irrelevant or threatening, it is easier to remain – if that is where you begin – at the centre.

However, faulty communication and resistance to critiques of positivism only partially explain the limited dialogue. Also significant is our failure to recognize, and therefore to examine, the extent to which our thought and practice remain locked in binary patterns. For example, critiques of reason, objectivity and foundational ontologies are frequently understood as entailing their opposites: irrationality, subjectivity or relativism, and nihilism. But neither are these the only alternatives, nor are they the alternatives articulated by most post-positivists.

10. Pauline Rosenau, 'Once Again into the Fray: International Relations Confronts the Humanities', *Millennium* (Vol. 19, No. 1, 1990), p. 83. On the debate in International Relations see special issues of *Millennium* (Vol. 17, No. 2, 1988); *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 33, No. 3, 1989; Vol. 34, No. 3, 1990); and Ramashray Roy, R.B.J. Walker and Richard Ashley, 'Dialogue: Towards a Critical Social Theory of International Politics', *Alternatives* (Vol. 13, No. 1, 1988), pp. 77–102.

11. On this theme see Mervyn Frost, *Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Reviewing and Reframing the Dialogue

This section points out some boundaries that frame, and often encumber, the third debate. The objective is neither to produce a definitive map – a contradiction in terms – nor to draw the boundaries of a counter-hegemonic project, but to suggest some of what is and is not at stake in taking critiques of positivism seriously. It is an attempt at clarification for the sake of enhanced communication.¹² Exposing how dichotomies frame our thinking not only illuminates the implications of post-positivism but also opens new spaces for dialogue.

What critiques of positivism require is a shift from oppositional to relational thinking. This insight is obscured by binary logic that precludes the possibility of understanding a critique of 'A' as entailing anything other than 'not-A'. Communication about and understanding of the current debate are pervasively shaped by dichotomies we continue to take as givens, even as they are called into question by post-positivism. In fact, post-positivism's repudiation of hierarchical dichotomies changes how terms are related to each other and thus changes their oppositional meaning. They are no longer structured as mutually exclusive dualities. Rather, contrasting but non-oppositional terms may be related along multiple dimensions and their non-binary structure permits more than two possibilities.

For example, to argue that a critique of objectivity logically implies subjectivity presupposes understanding these terms only as binary oppositions. Once we reject this categorical separation into contradictory terms, we realize objectivity cannot mean the absence of subjectivity but some relation to it. The issue then becomes how to specify that relation – a difficult task. But the choice is not between absolute objectivity and absolute subjectivity because these terms are no longer limited to oppositional meanings. Similarly, denying the oppositional status of subject and object changes what it means to refer to objects (and subjects). They need not disappear or become irrelevant, but their particular boundaries are no longer appropriately understood or studied as ontological 'givens' – as independent of either each other or of their sociolinguistic context.

In denying ahistorical boundaries, post-positivists expose the *interaction* of subject and object, fact and value. They argue that the act of drawing boundaries – the interaction of subject and object – is inseparable from all use of or reference to boundaries. Because the object does not correspond to some

12. As I am not developing specific arguments, but drawing out the relationships among them, readers are encouraged to pursue primary materials for the detail omitted here. On post-positivist critiques in International Relations see references in note 10; on the broader interdisciplinary debate see Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism*, *op. cit.*, in note 7, and *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978; Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan (eds), *Interpretive Social Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Michael Gibbons (ed.), *Interpreting Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); and Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (eds), *Social Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

transcendental mapping of 'reality', it is meaningful, and available for use or reference, only to the extent that the subject participates in a socio-linguistic system within which both the object, and the relationship of subject and object, have meaning. Thus, an understanding of objects must include reference to the role of the subject or knower in constituting the object of inquiry. Post-positivists do not so much question whether weapons or nation-states 'really exist', but how and why socio-linguistic systems constitute these objects in particular, contingent ways. An adequate understanding of weapons and nation-states must address the interaction of subject and object – how we generate, reproduce, resist and reconfigure these categories and how they are related to other boundaries we draw.

It follows that a critique of positivist empiricism is not necessarily a repudiation of empirical study. Rather than rejecting systematic inquiry or empirical research, the post-positivist critique involves examining the boundaries of our categories, frameworks and research questions, and asking how these came to be and how they are related within, and to, the context of inquiry and its relations of power. Rather than assuming that the researcher, as subject, examines an independently 'given' reality of objects, post-positivism seeks to understand the mutual and ongoing constitution of subject, object, and context. 'Contextualization' captures much of what the post-positivist critique advocates. While this may seem a simple claim, as soon as we undertake the actual specification of context, we are challenged by the scale and complexity of thinking relationally, rather than dichotomously.

Nor does the post-positivist rejection of 'absolute objectivity' entail its opposite, 'absolute relativism'.¹³ Equating the lack of absolute grounds with the impossibility of any grounds is an effect of binary – not post-positivist – thinking. Instead, repudiating the fact-value dichotomy forces us to see objectivity and subjectivity, reason and power, knowledge and politics in relation, as interacting. Thus post-positivism does not deny mapping or comparing; it denies that we do so by reference to some fixed independent reality. It insists that all maps involve normative commitments, may be contested, can be redrawn, and are never definitive.

To evaluate our maps – whether of knowledge claims or political positions – we must acknowledge their 'selectivity and engage in the demanding task of comparing the tradeoffs they involve. This entails taking responsibility for our mapping practices, understood as the rules we make and the politics they impose.¹⁴ In this sense, post-positivism is clearly political: it exposes the

13. Relativism is specifically not entailed because it 'presupposes an opposition between absolute and relative, an opposition that anti-foundationalism [post-positivism] rejects'. See Susan Hekman, 'The Feminization of Epistemology', *Women and Politics* (Vol. 7, No. 3, 1987), p. 79; See also Richard Rorty, 'Solidarity of Objectivity?', in J. Rahchman and C. West (eds), *Post-Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); and Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

14. See Peter Sederberg, *The Politics of Meaning* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press,

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pervasive presence of power and its complex effects, both enabling and oppressing. But we should remember that the difficulty has not actually increased: the post-positivist critique does not 'create' this complexity and uncertainty, it only exposes it.

A rejection of positivism does not leave us without guidelines for orienting research and inquiry. If intersubjective meaning is a constitutive element of the context we understand as 'reality', we must attend to symbolic meanings, language games, discourse analysis and cultural forms. If the meanings of agency and subjectivity are called into question, we are forced to recognize that intentionality, interpretation, self-reflection, consciousness, tacit knowledge, etc., are not external to but constitutive of practices, including those that are the focus of our analysis. With these understandings, it is incoherent to exclude the dimension of intersubjective (social) meaning from 'empirical' work.

The process of contextualizing involves paying attention to the interaction of socially constructed meanings, practices, institutions and systems. For example, contextualizing the Gulf War involves examining our constructions of peace, human nature, law, power, leadership and death. It includes relating the event to its context at a particular point in time – situating the Gulf War in relation to Bush's foreign policy agenda, geopolitical alignments and global economics – and to these dimensions as they are constituted in 'historical time' – the history of religious politics and the development of world capitalism. The aim is not to demand a 'complete' specification of context (which is not possible), but to insist on understanding events relationally: as embedded and contingent. Through this lens, how and why we impose the boundaries that distinguish categories, perspectives, practices and systems are revealed as integral dimensions of what we are trying to explain. The boundaries employed are not ahistorical 'givens' but social constructions that carry history – and baggage – that belies the categorical separation of subject from object and knower from known.

'Appropriate' responses to the post-positivist critique begin with critical reflection, not only attending to underlying assumptions and tacit commitments but also evaluating knowledge claims in terms of their political effects. It is in this sense that theory-practice, empirical-normative, and abstract-concrete are undermined as dichotomies and exposed as mutually constituted: 'perspectives, beliefs and ideologies are part of the *objective* reality and form a key constituent of power'.¹⁵ How United States Presidents and international relations theorists 'map' global events constitutes a form of power with concrete effects. Post-positivism exposes mapping and theorizing as political practices – practices of power which discipline meaning, enable and disable resistance, and generate intended and unintended consequences. To deny that power is a dimension of all mapping practices effectively condones and reproduces the status quo.

1984).

15. Roger Tooze, 'The Unwritten Preface', *Millennium* (Vol. 17, No. 2, 1988), p. 291, italics in original.

The third debate has challenged international relations theorists to confront metatheoretical issues, calling into question positivism and the objectivist metaphysics it presupposes. This has the salutary effect of focusing critical attention on a variety of boundaries, normally accepted as given, that structure thought and practice in international relations. Yet there remains a pivotal boundary virtually unchallenged in these debates: that of gender.

Critiques of Gender Hierarchy

Feminist scholars have generated an extensive literature with implications for our understanding of social relations. Yet this literature, and feminist claims more generally, have yet to be taken seriously in International Relations. The following section surveys developments in feminist scholarship, especially those relevant to the third debate in International Relations. It considers reasons for the failure of international relations to respond to the feminist critiques, and concludes by sketching three areas in the discipline in which feminism offers new insights.

Feminist scholarship is not monolithic, but tremendously diverse in range and orientation, due in part to its transdisciplinary nature. In addition, feminists are, by definition and conviction, engaged in critical studies, analyzing and resisting *status quo* masculinism and gender hierarchy.¹⁶ Criticism is integral to feminist scholarship in an additional sense: the diversity among women forces self-reflection on the meaning of feminism, definitions of 'woman', and the dangers of universalizing assumptions.¹⁷ Since it is transdisciplinary and critical, feminism presupposes a commitment to transgressing boundaries. As a result, feminist scholarship offers many resources for rethinking 'givens', redrawing boundaries, and re-envisioning our horizons: it has unique and significant contributions to make to the third debate in international relations.

In the early phase of contemporary feminist movements, and within traditional metatheoretical frameworks, 'woman', 'feminism', and even 'equality' were taken to be unproblematic terms. However, in the past twenty years, several interwoven developments have recast feminist understanding of these and other boundaries earlier taken for granted. First, the feminist movement itself has undergone changes in its population, politics, and self-understanding. Feminist

16. The term 'masculinism' refers to the ideological privileging of that which is associated with 'maleness' (not limited to men) over that which is associated with 'femaleness' and femininity. Gender hierarchy and patriarchal relations in this paper refer to male domination – individually and as a 'class' – through the appropriation/regulation of women's productive and reproductive labour, the social control of women through direct and indirect violence, and the meaning systems accompanying and legitimizing these relations of domination. Parts of this section, especially the conversational mapping, draw upon my 'Introduction' in V. Spike Peterson (ed.), *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Press, 1992), pp. 1–29.

17. Much of the contemporary literature is occupied with these complex issues. Because gender analyses are underdeveloped in International Relations, in this paper I focus on gender differences, at the expense of attention to important differences among women and among men.

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commitments to a broad-based movement and participatory process quickly exposed the superficiality of supposing that any one definition of 'woman' could address the diversity of women's lives. Differences of race, class, ethnicity, age, nationality, sexual orientation and physical ability challenge the validity as well as the legitimacy of universalizing definitions.¹⁸ These concrete experiences of confronting difference compelled feminists to examine the implications of totalizing assumptions, even – or especially – in the name of emancipatory politics.

Second, as research accumulated, feminists began to reassess inherited explanatory frameworks. These developments are typically mapped as overlapping in feminist scholarship: the deconstruction of error (eliminating falsehoods generated by sex-biased inquiry); the reconstruction of fact (incorporating women's activities and perspectives into the study of humankind); and the reconstruction of theory (rethinking fundamental relationships of knowledge, power and community).¹⁹ Hence, while research in the sixties started within traditional socio-political frameworks, it soon began to reinterpret classic texts, questioning the omission of significant feminist works from 'the tradition', and re-examine the central concepts of male-stream socio-political theory.²⁰

Not surprisingly, revealing and correcting androcentric bias particularly occupied feminist scholars in the earliest phase of 'women's studies'. Across disciplines, research exposed the omission of actual women and their activities, while documenting the abstract construction of 'woman' as deviant from or deficient in respect to male-as-norm criteria. The assumption that elite men's experience is representative of human experience was exposed as a systemic bias.

For example, feminist critiques showed that in history and political science, women and their experiences were rendered invisible by the traditional focus on public events, public figures, and politics understood as competition for power.²¹ In anthropology, they showed that male field-workers relied on male informants for information focused on men's activities; 'man-the-hunter' thus overshadowed women's primacy in food provision and social reproduction.²²

18. See Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (eds), *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Linda Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

19. See Catharine R. Stimpson, 'Women as Knowers', in D. Fowlkes and C. McClure (eds), *Feminist Visions* (University AL: University of Alabama Press, 1984), p. 17.

20. See Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds), *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), pp. 2-3. 'Male-stream' is Mary O'Brien's term. *The Politics of Reproduction* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

21. See, for example, Marianne Githens, 'The Elusive Paradigm: Gender, Politics and Political Behaviour', in Ada W. Finifter (ed.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1983); and Barbara J. Nelson, 'Women and Knowledge in Political Science: Texts, Histories, and Epistemologies', *Women and Politics* (Vol. 9, No. 2, 1989), pp. 1-25.

22. See Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward and Anthropology of Women* (New York and

In science, they showed that the choice and definition of puzzles, the design and interpretation of experiments, and the funding for research reflected the interests of predominantly male scientists.²³ But the most damning evidence came from re-examining Western constructions of the 'human' and related articulations of human nature, personhood, the moral agent, the rational being, and the political animal. Unifying all of these constructions was an emphasis on reason as a distinctively male capacity.²⁴ Drawing this boundary denied women the specific trait that Western philosophy identified with rational, moral and political agency. By categorizing men and women oppositionally, and equating masculinity with humanness, Western philosophy has denied all women – and others stigmatized as feminine – the privileged status of being fully 'human'. The effects of women's exclusion are still being mapped as the consequences of assuming that male-is-norm permeate the foundations of all disciplines. In general, deconstructing the errors of androcentric scholarship revealed – and continues to reveal – systematic distortion of truth claims about 'social reality.'

At the same time, feminists engaged in reconstructive research that 'added women', that is, incorporated women's lives and experiences into the study of humankind. Across disciplines, feminists noted and investigated recurring dualisms. In particular, they examined the division between public and private to probe the relationship between gender politics, male and female worlds, and other hierarchical dichotomies (subject-object, culture-nature, reason-affect).²⁵ Feminists showed that the 'givenness' of male-female biological difference was used simultaneously to explain and to justify the figurative and literal separation of men and women, masculine and feminine, into separate and unequal spheres. The binary association of masculinity with public power, agency, culture, reason, freedom, etc., and the association of femininity with privacy, passivity, nature, irrationality, necessity, etc., justified multiple expressions of gender inequality. Women's exclusion from political power and military might, from well-paid occupations and prestigious appointments, from scientific and religious authority, and from cultural and artistic leadership was rendered natural by reference to 'woman's nature' as different from, and inferior to, man's.²⁶

London: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

23. See Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986); and Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

24. See Lorene M. G. Clark and Lynda Lange (eds), *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Nancy Tuana, *Women and the History of Philosophy* (New York: Paragon House, 1992).

25. See, for example, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds), *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Jean B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Linda Nicholson, *Gender and History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

26. The following are merely suggestive of this voluminous literature. In addition to feminist citations throughout this paper, see, for example, the discipline-specific bibliographic review essays in the feminist journal *Signs*; Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *The*

This research, which focused on making women visible and exposing gender hierarchy, documented the extent and tenacity of androcentric bias and, especially, the anointment of men as knowers. But even more important, the project of adding women to existing paradigms exposed existing gender boundaries and the need for fundamental reconceptualizations. For example, including women in history forced a reassessment of conventional notions of periodization and social categorization. Because women's history is not that of men, the characterization of third century Athens as the Golden Age and the European Renaissance as progressive is less than compelling when their effects on and meaning for women – concubinage and confinement, domestication of bourgeois wives and persecution of witches – are properly understood.²⁷ Similarly, it is not possible to include 'women's work' in economic frameworks that assume the male model of work as paid labour. Nor can women's asymmetrical access to power and resources in their homes and in the labour force be accommodated within conventional definitions of politics. In general, feminists have exposed the contradictions of 'adding women' to constructions that are defined in terms of masculinity, such as formal politics, public authority, economic power, rationality and freedom. Insofar as fundamental dichotomies are historically gender-coded and structurally oppositional, 'adding women' requires changing the meaning, and therefore the boundaries, of 'given' categories in Western thought and practice.

The feminist reconstruction of theory shifts from 'adding women' to rethinking such categories and their relationship to knowledge, power, and community. It simultaneously shifts from treating women as 'knowable' to women as 'knowers'. The concept of gender is central to this transformation. In contrast to positivist notions of biological 'sex', gender is a systematic social construction that dichotomizes identities, behaviours, and expectations as masculine and feminine. It is not simply a trait of individuals but an institutionalized feature of social life. The concept of gender enables feminists to examine masculinity and femininity as fundamental but not 'given' identities: they are learned and therefore mutable. Moreover, gender is a 'relational' not oppositional construct: accurate understanding of men's activities and the ideology of masculinity requires accurately understanding women's activities and the ideology of femininity, and vice versa. Hence, women's studies is not separate from but transformative of men's studies.

Feminists analyse gender as a pervasive bias. In one sense, gender is a socially imposed and internalized lens through which individuals perceive and respond to the world. In a second sense, the pervasiveness of gendered meanings shapes concepts, practices, and institutions in identifiably gendered ways. Employing

Journal of American History (Vol. 75, No. 1, 1988); and V. Spike Peterson, 'Whose Rights?' A Critique of the 'Givens' in Human Rights Discourse', *Alternatives* (Vol. 15, No. 3, 1990), pp. 303–44.

27. On this see Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

gender as an analytic category, feminists argue that 'all of social life is gendered': we experience and act in the world as gendered subjects, and the categories through which we understand and act upon the world are shaped by gendered meanings.²⁸ As a consequence:

...it was not simply the range and scope of objects that required transformation: more profoundly, and threateningly, the very questions posed and the methods used to answer them, basic assumptions about methodology, criteria of validity and merit, all needed to be seriously questioned. The political, ontological and epistemological commitments underlying patriarchal discourses, as well as their theoretical contents required re-evaluation from feminist perspectives.²⁹

In this third development, feminists joined other post-positivists in metatheoretical re-examinations of political, ontological and epistemological commitments. The understanding that androcentric discourse excluded women's experience, that a universal notion of 'woman' denied differences among women, and that 'adding women' did not lead to equality, were further illuminated by post-positivist insights. But post-positivism was particularly significant for feminists in that it permitted a theorization of positivism, instrumental reason, and science itself as gendered. Feminists argued that if knowledge claims are necessarily grounded in lived experience, not some transcendent reality, then elite male experience cannot be used to ground claims about *human* social reality; to do so distorts our knowledge of that reality. Finally, they exposed the distortions of androcentrism in privileging ways of knowing that are partial because they are also derived exclusively from male experience, as that experience is constructed under patriarchal relations.³⁰

Emphasizing that the issue is not simply the relative absence of women in science, Evelyn Fox Keller has documented the persistence and power of the tendency to associate masculinity with objectivity, science, and asexuality. The 'asexual' aspect is consistent with privileging masculine science over female nature, the former being associated with disembodied rationality, and the latter being associated with embodied passion and its sexual connotations. Having divided the world into the knower – the mind or subject – and the knowable –

28. Nelson, *op. cit.*, in note 21, p. 4.

29. Elizabeth Gross, 'Conclusion', in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds), *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), pp. 191-2.

30. On feminist critiques of positivism and/or science see Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka (eds), *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and the Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1983); Keller, *op. cit.*, in note 23; and Harding, *op. cit.*, in notes 13 and 23. For surveys of feminist epistemology see special issues of 'Feminism and Epistemology: Approaches to Research in Women and Politics', *Women and Politics* (Vol. 7, No. 3, Fall 1987) and 'Feminism and Deconstruction', *Feminist Studies* (Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 1988).

nature or the object – scientific ideology further specifies the relation ‘between knower and known [as] one of distance and separation’.³¹ Objectivity then presupposes a scientific mind and modes of knowing rigidly set apart from nature.

Like rationality, however, objectivity is less a property one is born with than an acquired skill, part of the learning process of delineating subject and object. Feminist theories of gender formation suggest linkages between male gender-identity formation, based on extreme separation, individuation, autonomy, and objectification, and ‘a set of cultural values which simultaneously elevates what is defined as scientific and what is defined as masculine’.³² An important consequence of associating masculinity with objectivity and science, both of which carry much prestige, is a powerful and pervasive devaluation of femininity, subjectivity and affect. Keller argues that these associations result, simultaneously, in extra validation of a distorted, overly objectivist scientific methodology and a devaluation of ‘what is called feminine – be it a branch of knowledge, a way of thinking, or woman herself’.³³

This analysis has implications for positivism more generally. Post-positivist critiques, in their recognition of social reality as inter-subjectively constructed, insist on recognizing subjectivity and inter-subjectivity as inextricable from social relations and social theory. However, to the extent that masculinism is privileged, forms of knowledge – including post-positivism – associated with the ‘subjective’ and the ‘feminine’ are devalued and resisted as inferior to ‘hard science’ with its claims to objectivity, certainty and control. Hence, at least some of the resistance to post-positivism stems from resistance to the ‘feminization’ of science it implies. Moreover, to the extent that positivism is a specifically masculine form of knowing, critics of positivism need to address feminist critiques. I return to these points below.

Feminists have shifted from working within positivist boundaries to engaging critically the post-positivist critique, developing a wide range of contributions relevant to metatheoretical debates. Given feminist challenges to ‘objectivity’, ‘rationality’, and ‘science’, why do we see so little evidence of this scholarship – and especially its theoretical contributions – outside of ‘women’s studies’?

31. Evelyn Fox Keller, ‘Gender and Science’, in Harding and Hintikka, *op. cit.*, in note 30, pp. 190-1.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 199. Briefly, the thesis of object-relations theory is that, under patriarchal relations, females are assigned primary care-taking for infants whose development into individuals is simultaneously development into gender-specific identities. For females the individuation, or separation, process renders a self- and gender-identity that is ‘relational’: the mother-world females are ‘separating’ from is not absolutely different from the (gendered) identity they are forming. In contrast, the separation demanded for male self-identity renders an ‘objectifying’ orientation: boys’ separation from the mother-world includes not only rejecting it as gender-inappropriate but also, due to patriarchal ideology, disparaging it as inferior. Because masculinity/manhood is defined specifically as the *exclusion* of femininity/womanhood, boys distance themselves from feminine characteristics or feelings because they can only be understood as diminishing the preferred status of masculinity/manhood.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

Specifically, how is feminism relevant to international relations and why is it so marginalized?

Why is Feminism Important for International Relations

The feminist critique in international relations is parallel to the post-positivist critique in several ways. First, feminist critiques of science, where androcentrism has been the target of rigorous critique, demand our attention. Going beyond the post-positivist critique of subject-object and fact-value dichotomies, feminists have located essentialized gender 'difference' at the core of positivism and objectivism. They argue that the 'sovereign rational subject' privileged in positivist accounts is a fiction premised on elite male experience and masculinity. Whether as objective knower or autonomous political agent, this 'sovereign man' cannot represent 'woman', epistemologically or politically.³⁴

Second, 'real world' events are not adequately addressed by androcentric accounts that render women and gender relations invisible. On the contrary, the centrality of gender is revealed by rapidly shifting relations between women and men, and between masculinity and femininity in today's world. Specifically, gender issues are visible in the following: the interacting local, national, and global effects of women's liberation movements; the position of women in contemporary social movements (as revolutionaries, peace activists and environmental leaders); the shifting divisions of labour as women worldwide increase their participation in wage labour; the global feminization of poverty; the significance of gender in the design and implementation of economic development policies; the importance of reproductive issues and population planning; and the small but steady increases in women's participation in formal politics. The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the declaration of equal rights for women and the convention on the elimination of sex discrimination have focused attention on gender inequality as a global issue. While the influence of gender in world affairs is not new, systemic data and shifting gender boundaries expose the pervasiveness of gender structuring and suggest the salience of gender-sensitive analyses. It is no longer adequate, and was never accurate, to treat gender as irrelevant to our knowledge of world politics.

Third, feminism is particularly relevant to international relations in the context of the current post-positivist movement, since feminist scholarship offers unique and significant contributions to the third debate. These are generated in part by feminism's transdisciplinary and critical orientations, and in part by its particular theoretical developments in response to post-positivism. Less bounded by any narrow disciplinary lens, feminists examine insights from diverse locations, situate them in larger transdisciplinary contexts, and weave new understandings out of these multiple threads.

34. See Anne Sisson Runyan and V. Spike Peterson, 'The Radical Future of Realism: Feminist Subversions of IR Theory', *Alternatives* (Vol. 16, No. 1, 1991), pp. 67-106.

As already noted, developments in feminist theorizing challenge critics of positivism to move not only beyond dichotomies but also beyond the 'given' dualisms of man-woman, masculine-feminine. This move is simultaneously post-positivist and feminist, requiring the mutual deconstruction of gender as a dichotomy and dichotomies as androcentric.

Why is the Conversation so Stunted?

Given the breadth and depth of the feminist critique, why does the 'centre' pay so little attention to feminist scholarship?³⁵ This scholarship challenges the entire edifice of 'men's studies' – academe as androcentrically constructed. How are the systemic implications of feminist theory so effectively silenced?

Under existing patriarchal relations, resistance to feminism is pervasive, which makes it hard to distinguish between this general resistance and the specific resistance to feminist critiques of international relations. On the face of it, the 'invisibility' of women in international relations is explained by the gender selectivity imposed by who the primary actors and analysts are (statesmen, scholars), what the discipline purports to study (power, war, international politics), and how the discipline's topics are studied (realism, neorealism, pluralism, structuralism). Quite simply, international relations resists feminism not only because the field is dominated by men who engage in and study 'masculine' activities, but because they do so through androcentric lenses.³⁶ Thus, to take feminism seriously would require acknowledging the discipline's androcentrism and examining both how international processes have gender-specific consequences and how gendered categories and orientations shape world politics.³⁷

Of course, not everyone in the centre ignores feminism. It is worth noting that many individuals have taken strong, and often risk-laden, positions in support of including women and promoting 'equality.' Efforts to include readings, lectures and papers on women, in coursework and conferences, are important and

35. On this see Berenice Carroll, 'Review Essay: Political Science II: International Politics, Comparative Politics, and Feminist Radicals', *Signs* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 1980), pp. 289–306; and Kathy Ferguson, 'Male-Ordered Politics: Feminism and Political Science' in Terence Ball (ed.), *Idioms of Inquiry* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 209–22.

36. On feminism and international relations see Christine Sylvester, 'Feminist Theory and Gender Studies in International Relations', *International Studies Notes* (Vol. 16/17, 1991/1992), pp. 32–8; Runyan and Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 34; Special Issue: 'Women and International Relations', *Millennium* (Vol. 17, No. 3, 1988) and the essays by Maxine Molyneux, Robert Keohane and Sandra Whitworth in *Millennium* (Vol. 18, No. 2, 1989); Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (eds), *Gender and International Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 16; V. Spike Peterson and Anne Sisson Runyan, *Global Gender Issues* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, forthcoming); and Christine Sylvester, *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

37. See Fred Halliday, 'Hidden from International Relations: Women and the International Arena', *Millennium* (Vol. 17, No. 3, Winter 1988), pp. 419–28.

appreciated. Yet they seem curiously stunted by comparison to feminism's transformational claims, thus raising the question of why efforts that are made to address feminism seem almost at odds with feminism's systemic and theoretical claims.

Of feminism's many variants, liberal feminism – stereotyped as a quest for 'equal opportunity' – receives the most attention both within and outside of academe. If the efforts of international relations to address feminism spring from liberal-pluralist commitments and/or images, this explains in part why feminism's more transformative claims remain unacknowledged. 'Adding women as equals' does not constitute a systemic revolution or 'philosophical insurgency'. To many in international relations, accepting feminism seems to mean no more than making a personal effort to include women's issues in the field and support liberal feminist objectives.

Here the intersection of liberalism and positivism is key. Liberal feminism may in fact have transformative implications,³⁸ but that radical potential is obscured by positivist commitments. In brief, to the extent that positivist orientations prevail, feminism can only be understood as promoting the addition of sex as a variable (since gender is ostensibly an irrelevant factor in 'objective' science). As long as gender is not recognized as an analytic category, no theoretical change results from adding women to 'universal' categories so that they can achieve 'equality' with men. Thus, the positivist commitments that continue to predominate in international relations preclude understanding feminism as anything other than a call for adding sex as a variable or including 'women's issues' in otherwise unchanged coursework and frameworks. Through a positivist lens, the implications of gender as a theoretical category are rendered invisible.

Yet the third debate and feminist critiques are precisely about transforming positivist and masculinist boundaries. The next section suggests some of the implications of a variety of feminist approaches. Specifically, it sketches how feminist and post-positivist perspectives are related to other critical approaches.

Expanding the Dialogue: Feminist Contributions

I identify three inter-related and overlapping conversations that feminists and other scholars, including those in international relations, participate in, and to which feminists add a distinctive voice. My objective is to specify the distinctive feminist voice in each, and suggest how feminist contributions both add to and transform non-feminist orientations.

The focus of the first conversation is empirical research and its relationship to claims about social reality. As Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka observe, 'What counts as knowledge must be grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which humans

38. See Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1981); and Runyan and Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 34.

engage'.³⁹ Not only feminists, but other subordinated, marginalized groups – e.g., the colonized, racial and ethnic minorities, the underclass – argue that knowledge claims based on the partial experience of elites are erroneous: they distort our understanding of social relations.

This conversation is related to the feminist corrective projects discussed above: revealing the exclusion and trivialization of women's diverse experiences and insisting that women's lives be included in the construction of knowledge claims about social reality. Moreover, because 'male and female worlds' are not categorically separate but mutually constituted, when we study women's lives we both add to and alter our knowledge of men's lives. In this conversation, 'adding women' improves our conventional understandings of, for example, political economy and social reproduction, by generating less partial and distorted beliefs about men as well as about women.

The gendered division of labour has systemic effects on our individual lives as well as the world we live in. Women's paid and unpaid labour is a crucial variable in all economies and the work that women do is an indispensable dimension of reproducing all social orders. In the Western world, women's domestic work includes not only childcare and the physical maintenance of the household but also caring for the ill and elderly, sustaining familial communications, mediating between public agencies and family demands, and servicing males personally, sexually and emotionally.⁴⁰ The characterization of women's work as 'servicing' applies to paid as well as unpaid labour: women predominate in the poorly paid service sectors and are expected to do 'servicing' – emotional care-giving, appearing submissive and 'available', working overtime and without benefits – when employed elsewhere. In the global economy, women also perform 'servicing' work: as suppliers of fuel, food and water in developing countries, as domesticated and dexterous assemblers in export industries, as part-time and non-unionized labour in industrialized countries, as decorations and sources of emotional and sexual gratification in tourist enterprises, and as care-takers and domestic conflict mediators worldwide.⁴¹ Women's production, reproduction, and 'servicing' are essential components of the world we live in. We do not accurately understand how that world is made, or how it works, when we ignore the work that women do.

Insofar as all of social reality is gendered, all traditional topics in international relations warrant gender-sensitive analysis. In this conversation, the most obvious research agenda is to examine how international processes have gender-specific

39. Sandra Harding and Merrill Hintikka, 'Introduction', in Harding and Hintikka, *op. cit.*, in note 30, p. x.

40. See Laura Balbo, 'The Servicing Work of Women and the Capitalist State', in M. Zeitlin (ed.), *Political Power and Social Theory* (Greenwich CT: JAI Press, 1982), pp. 251–70; and Linda Gordon (ed.), *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

41. See, for example, Gita Sen and Caren Grown (eds), *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987); Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (London: ZED, 1986); and Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

consequences, and how gender affects international processes. The literature on 'women in development' is probably the most familiar gender-sensitive research, but a variety of feminist international relations conversations are increasingly visible, concerning for example: women's rights as a dimension of international human rights discourse;⁴² the history and contemporary relevance of women's peace and ecological activism;⁴³ 'women and politics', including state, non-state, and trans-state political activities;⁴⁴ and the gender dimensions of militarism, security, nationalism, foreign policy, and international politics broadly construed.⁴⁵

Examining the gender-specific effects of international relations exposes global patterns in men's and women's lives, providing empirical data that is crucial for accurate description and explanation. But these concrete effects are simultaneously a product of gendered categories and frameworks. For example, it is the androcentric definition of 'human' that conceals how women systemically suffer 'human' rights abuses. It is a masculinist understanding of 'development' that neglects women's productivity in non-industrialized economies. And it is a focus on men's lives that obscures servicing and reproduction as socially necessary labour. In this conversation, 'adding women' exposes how men and women are differently affected by global processes, and it can also reveal how gender ideologies affect world politics.

The second conversation is more explicitly theoretical and currently focuses on issues raised by critiques of positivism. Participants specifically reject simplistic notions of objectivity, rationality and the neutrality of methods. This group emphasizes instead 'the ways in which science is a human activity and, as such, reflect[s] the ways in which particular activities are defined, understood, given meaning, and evaluated by the particular society'.⁴⁶ Gender politics, like race and class discrimination, shape the way in which science is a human activity.

In this conversation, feminists insist that gender be acknowledged as systemically affecting social relations and their ideological expressions. They extend anti-foundational critiques by identifying objectivity, rationalism, and science as male/masculine ways of knowing as shaped by patriarchal social

42. See, for example, Riane Eisler, 'Human Rights: Toward an Integrated Theory of Action,' *Feminist Issues* Vol. 7, No. 1, 1987); and Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 26.

43. See, for example, Judith Stiehm (ed.), *Women and Men's Wars* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983); Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (eds), *Rocking the Ship of State* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989); and Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: ZED, 1987).

44. See, for example, Vicky Randall, *Women and Politics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: ZED, 1986); and Peterson *op. cit.*, in note 16.

45. See note 36; and also Jean B. Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?* (Boston: South End Press, 1983); and George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).

46. Sondra Farganis, 'Feminism and the Reconstruction of Social Science', in A. Jaggar and S. Bordo (eds), *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 211.

relations. Locating masculinism at the foundation of objectivist metaphysics, they argue that the hierarchical dichotomies that typify Western culture are a product of the gender hierarchy 'that is central to patriarchal thought and society.'⁴⁷

Arguments that Western philosophy is male take a variety of mutually compatible forms. First, Western philosophy as practice has been monopolized by elite males; as subject matter it has construed 'men's nature' as human nature and focused on 'men's' public-sphere concerns (politics, justice and universal truth); and as an institution it has reproduced the authority and legitimation of patriarchal experience and world views.⁴⁸ Second, feminist object relations theory explains the dichotomization of masculine (objectifying, autonomous) and feminine (empathetic, relational) identities and cognitive styles by reference to rigid gender-differentiated childrearing practices. The latter interact with 'a belief system that equates objectivity with masculinity, and a set of cultural values that simultaneously (and conjointly) elevates what is defined as scientific and what is defined as masculine.'⁴⁹ Third, feminists draw upon other post-structuralist and post-modernist critiques to argue that the phallocentrism of the Western symbolic order and the binary logic of Western metaphysics privilege masculine over feminine in a recurring set of dualisms that give Western philosophy its characteristic form.⁵⁰

In general then, what feminists contribute to the second conversation is the insight that gender hierarchy is not merely coincidental to but is in a significant sense constitutive of Western philosophy's objectivist metaphysics. Modernity's expression of that metaphysics – positivist science – institutionalizes the association of masculinity with objectivity, reason, freedom, transcendence and control, and femininity with subjectivity, feeling, necessity, contingency and disorder. Women are thus excluded from the authority of knowing, and from authority more generally, by the exclusion of 'woman' from privileged rationality, transcendence and autonomy.

The distinctiveness of the feminist contribution has specific and significant implications for those participating in the second conversation. First, to the extent that masculinity remains privileged and positivism is identified with masculinity, critics of positivism meet resistance not only to their arguments *per se* but also to the 'demasculinization' of science that their arguments entail. Second, to the extent that objectivist metaphysics constitutes, and is constituted by, the dichotomy of masculine-feminine, moving beyond objectivism/positivism requires moving beyond essentialized gender identities as well. In other words, taking

47. Hekman, *op. cit.*, in note 13, p. 68; and V. Spike Peterson, *An Archaeology of Domination*, Ph.D. Dissertation, American University, Washington, DC, 1988.

48. See Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Okin, *op. cit.*, in note 24; and Harding and Hintikka, *op. cit.*, in note 30.

49. Keller, *op. cit.*, in note 23, p. 89.

50. See, for example, Susan Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Helene Cixous, 'Castration or Decapitation?', *Signs* (Vol. 7, No. 11, 1981), pp. 41-55; and Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, Trans. C. Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

seriously post-positivism/post-modernism demands taking seriously the feminist analysis of gender as historically contingent; failure to do so leaves essentializing objectivism – and its distortions – in place.

In the third conversation, participants engage empirical and theoretical concerns in varying proportions; what they share are critiques of modernity's interlocking systems of domination. Here, Frankfurt-school critical theorists, ecologists, neo-marxists, world system theorists, and activists for peace and social change speak of moving toward a more just, less terrifying world. They explore the multiple contradictions and contemporary crises of technical rationality, accumulation, legitimation, ecological deterioration and the welfare state. They specifically criticize processes of objectification – variously imposed by industrial capitalism, science, militarism and bureaucratization – that render people and nature into 'objects' whose manipulation and exploitation are taken for granted. Thus, they focus not only on domination practices but also on how these processes are legitimated and institutionalized, and how their reproduction is ensured by rendering them 'natural,' and therefore not political.

Again, feminists share the concerns that underlie this conversation. Their distinctive contribution in this case is empirical and analytical evidence of gender hierarchy as fundamental to domination in its many guises.⁵¹ First, females suffer disproportionately under systems of domination because females constitute at least one half of most subordinated groups, and are systematically rendered more vulnerable to sexual and other direct violence, inadequate health care, political subordination, and economic impoverishment. Second, the naturalization of women's oppression – taking gender hierarchy as 'given' rather than a historical, political boundary construction – serves as the model for depoliticizing exploitation more generally, whether of other groups or of nature.

As an historical matter, early state formation marked the effective centralization of political authority and accumulation processes, the institutionalization of gender and class exploitation, and the ideological legitimation of these transformations. At least since Aristotle, the codification of man as 'master' and woman as 'matter' has powerfully naturalized and depoliticized man's exploitation of women, of other men, and of nature.⁵² Perhaps most familiarly, feminists have exposed the politics of defining 'natural resources' as 'there for the taking' – no permission required, no obligations incurred. Thus defined in the modern era, women's labour and bodies, the earth, and native peoples all become 'objects' under the control, possession and sometimes 'protection' of scientific, governmental and military elites.

Feminists argue that the domination of women, nature, and all who are constructed as 'other' is not a matter of 'essential,' atemporal qualities but of socially constructed, historically contingent practices. Eliminating the justification

51. See Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 47; Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Mies, *op. cit.*, in note 41.

52. Eva Cantarella, *Pandora's Daughters* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); and Peterson, *op. cit.*, in note 47.

of oppression as 'natural' does not eliminate oppression or preclude other justifications of it. But in today's world, the hegemonic ideology that treats hierarchies as natural serves powerfully to legitimate and reproduce domination: through the internalization of oppression, the silencing of protest, and the depoliticization of exploitative rule and global inequities. Thus, feminist critiques of 'naturalized' subjection offer rich resources for re-envisioning, resisting, and transforming social relations.

The point of this discussion is neither to posit a conflict-free feminist utopia, nor to argue that feminist critiques necessarily take precedence over other emancipatory discourses, nor to claim that gender hierarchy is always the most salient dimension of oppressive dynamics. It is to argue that feminist voices offer alternative visions, that gender domination is not reducible to some other form and, therefore, that liberation movements must include women's liberation movements; and that while it is not always the most salient, gender is rarely lacking as a dimension of oppressive relations, and recognizing this fact improves our critical understanding and possibilities for change. In sum, we do not effectively contest objectification if, by ignoring gender, we leave the objectification of 'Woman, native, other'⁵³ in place.

Feminist voices add to and transform each of these conversations by making gender bias visible and suggesting corrective strategies. By reference to these conversations, feminism demonstrates its empirical, epistemological, and political relevance. In addition, feminist contributions establish that post-positivism need not be apolitical. We can identify the crucial point of the post-positivist critique as rejecting transcendental, decontextualized criteria for assessing epistemological, ontological or normative claims, and therefore establishing the necessity of taking responsibility for the world(s) we make. In contrast to visions of nihilism, this understanding of post-positivism reminds us that we never had anything other than historically contingent 'foundations'; thus post-positivism does not render us worse off (for losing nonexistent foundations) but more accountable (for the foundations we construct). Post-positivism does not deny socially constituted foundations, only the illusion of transcendental ones.

These points suggest the value of specifically post-positivist feminist approaches. Feminists are, by definition, critical of status quo social relations and committed to political transformation. In contrast to the apoliticism and theoretical anarchism post-positivists are too frequently and in large part falsely accused of, the critical commitments of feminists compel them to take the relationships between reason and power, knowledge and domination seriously. Post-positivist feminist scholarship therefore speaks directly to the concerns of those who resist the post-positivist critique out of the belief that it denies the pursuit of systematic inquiry and/or the possibility of 'grounds' for transformative action. Post-positivism keeps feminists attentive to the dangers of essentializing and totalizing practices, while feminists extend post-positivism by

53. This phrase is taken from the title of Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

exposing the gendered foundations of objectivism and by insisting on politically relevant critique. All movements contain both progressive and regressive tendencies – neither science nor post-positivism is inherently progressive. Rather, feminists and post-positivists must figure out ‘how to advance the progressive and inhibit the regressive’ because the ‘alternative is that regressive forces in the larger society [will] manipulate these contradictory features and mobilize the progressive tendencies for their own ends.’⁵⁴

As argued here, feminism is neither just about women, nor the addition of women to male-stream constructions; it is about transforming ways of being and knowing. As discussed here, feminist perspectives are valuable in multiple ways: for increasing empirical accuracy and adequacy, for demonstrating the interdependence of dichotomized terms, for revealing masculinist bias in epistemological as well as empirical constructs, for bridging post-positivist and political/critical approaches, and for re-politicizing ‘naturalized’ oppression and its legitimations.

Conclusion

The third debate in international relations is about responding to now-formidable critiques of positivist orthodoxy. The boundaries of subject-object and fact-value dichotomies are reconfigured, denying ontological foundations and value-free objectivity, without entailing anti-empiricism or epistemological anarchy. Acknowledging the relation of subject and object – their interaction, not opposition – shifts our attention to subjects as embodied, socially constructed knowers and agents. Acknowledging that facts and values are in relation, not opposition, shifts our attention to knowers, knowing and known as embedded in webs of meaning and historical contingency. Rethinking ‘givens’ is disruptive of traditional approaches, but need not be disabling. Post-positivist understanding requires that we situate research categories, practices and frameworks in historical and contemporary context and reflect critically on our responsibility for the worlds and boundaries we make, not discover.

Feminist scholarship now extends well beyond positivist orientations, making significant contributions to metatheoretical debates in and outside of international relations. Taking post-positivist critiques further, feminists argue that the dualisms of Western thought themselves derive from an essentialized dichotomy of male-female difference. Acknowledging that social reality is pervasively gendered shifts our attention to the systemic effects of masculinism and its promotion of disembodied and disembedded knowing. Post-positivist critiques fail to transgress positivist boundaries if they leave naturalized gender difference and its oppressive dynamics in place. Taking feminism seriously requires that we examine both how international relations has systemic gender-differentiated

54. Harding, *op. cit.*, in note 13, p. 11.

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effects and how gender biased categories, identities, practices and frameworks affect the conduct and study of international relations.

New horizons require new sitings, new boundaries. Through a post-positivist lens, the mapping practices of positivism and objectivist metaphysics are revealed; hierarchical dichotomies are sighted and their disciplining effects are exposed. Through a feminist lens, dichotomous mapping practices are themselves seen to be a consequence of masculinist experience and standpoint: objective-subjective, masculine-feminine, fact-value, order-anarchy – these dichotomies are exposed as boundary projects embedded within a masculinist ‘objectifying’ paradigm. Identifying progressive paths entails continually transgressing and resiting boundaries that ‘naturalize’ objectification; in today’s world, this means taking critiques of both positivism and gender hierarchy seriously.

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