Gendering Jones: feminisms, IRs, masculinities*

TERRELL CARVER, MOLLY COCHRAN AND JUDITH SQUIRES

Introduction

In ‘Does “Gender” Make the World Go Round? Feminist Critiques of International Relations’, Adam Jones claims that ‘the most important . . . contribution of feminist critiques has been to add a gender dimension to [IR], but that their success will remain “mixed” until their “frameworks are expanded and to some extent reworked’. While Jones’s piece is exceptionally wide-ranging, our view is that overall he presents three assertions. The first is that feminism is restricted by its ‘standard equation of gender . . . with women/femininity’; the second is that the ‘classical tradition’ is the standard by which feminist contributions to IR should be judged; and the third is that feminism is defective in its treatment of gender, because it does not adequately conceptualize and study men and masculinity. In this article we take issue with each of these assertions in turn, drawing first on ‘feminisms’ generally, then using writers in feminist IR, and finally reviewing the literature on men and masculinity, both specifically feminist and otherwise.

Feminisms

Jones argues that there are three core characteristics defining feminist critique: firstly, that ‘feminists, by definition, reclaim women as subjects of history, politics and international relations’; secondly, that an essential feature of feminist critique is ‘an epistemological foundation in the realm of women’s experiences’; thirdly, that feminist theories necessarily adopt a normative contention that ‘women and the feminine constitute historically underprivileged, under-represented, and under-recognized social groups and “standpoints”, and this should change in the direction of greater equality’. Thus Jones claims that there are three core characteristics to feminist theory: ontological, epistemological, and normative. In order to interrogate this claim we must go to the source—the body of feminist literature to which many IR feminists have turned for insight on these questions. We argue that whilst there is some

* In this article the three authors address these points in coordinated sections, ’Feminisms’ by Squires, ‘IRs’ by Cochran, and ‘Masculinities’ by Carver. They would like to express their thanks to the International Relations Research Group at Bristol, to two anonymous readers, and to Marysia Zalewski and V. Spike Peterson.

2 Ibid., pp. 420-1, 407, 405.
3 Ibid., pp. 405-6.
support for Jones’s claim within certain strands of feminist writings, each of the three core characteristics posited is highly contested. Indeed, it is dispute over precisely these ontological, epistemological, and normative questions, rather than consensus around them, that has characterized feminist theorizing in the past two decades. We shall further indicate that within these debates it is the broadly post-positivist perspectives which are most critical of these three core characteristics and therefore best placed to theorize gender in precisely the way that a generous reading of Jones would inspire.

Subjectivities

The problem of trying to capture all the nuances of notions of ‘Woman’, ‘woman’, or even ‘women’ in any categorical grouping has propelled many feminists towards the twin extremes of transcendence or deconstruction (where some essential ‘womanness’ transcends individuals, or where contingent individuals emerge as narratives, respectively), with others adopting constructivist accounts of gender (where individual agency and social structuration create limits and possibilities). There is a productive tension between essentialist, constructivist, and deconstructivist understandings of gendered subjectivity which has proved to be constitutive of the field of recent feminist theory. The cumulative result of these debates has been the current unease about articulating any stable notion of female identity and an uncertainty about the nature of a feminist political project. Such debates indicate intense consideration of ontological questions. Rather than simply ‘reclaiming women as subjects’, most feminist theorists in recent years have engaged in considered debate concerning deconstructionist, constructivist, and essentialist positions, with few adopting the unproblematically essentialist stance assumed by Jones to be ‘standard’. Indeed, there are also more nuanced positions within this schema, arguing neither for nor against essential female subjectivity, but rather between authentic and ironic understandings of such identities.

It is these ontological debates, and the questioning of essentialist perspectives, which have motivated the transition from working on women to theorising gender. Echoing developments in feminist theory, the 1980s witnessed a growing concern about, and literature on, the shifting nature of men’s lives. As Lynne Segal notes, ‘books researching fatherhood, men’s violence against women and children, male identities and male mythologies now interrogate men, as a sex, in a way until recently reserved for women—as a problem’. It is now becoming common to speak of ‘masculinities’ in the plural and to explore the fluctuating constitution of hegemonic and subordinate forms of masculinity. Far from assuming the polarized analyses of some forms of early second-wave feminism in which ‘all men’ oppress ‘all women’, sexual politics currently takes as its focus the transgression of all existing gender boundaries.

4 Throughout this article we use ‘post-positivist’ to refer to approaches that express scepticism concerning positivist assumptions of a unity between natural and social sciences, and the appropriateness of using natural science methodologies in political and international studies.

Epistemologies

What then of Jones’s claimed second core feminist feature, its epistemological foundation in the realm of women’s experience? It is certainly the case that much early feminist writing was taken up with establishing and exploring the extent to which traditional epistemologies worked systematically to exclude the possibility that women could be the agents of knowledge. The development of critiques of traditional epistemologies as specifically ‘male’ generated debate concerning the existence and/or nature of a specifically ‘female’ knowledge. Though diverse in form, these feminist epistemological frameworks have tended to share a critical stance in relation to rationality, objectivity, and universality, asserting the significance and legitimacy of emotional, politically engaged, and particularistic ways of knowing.

One of the most significant strands of thought on this issue draws upon the insights of historical materialism in order to generate an account of experiences common to all women. This is an account which does indeed provide a foundation for a women’s ‘standpoint’ with privileged epistemological status. We find this approach in the work of Nancy Hartsock: ‘As an engaged vision’, she argues, ‘the understanding of the oppressed, the adoption of a standpoint, exposes the real relations among human beings as inhuman, points beyond the present, and carries a historically liberatory role’. This perspective adopts an explicitly emancipatory position, assuming a notion of the ‘real’ and that certain social groups have better access to this reality, and that the shared understandings generated within subordinate groups are not given but must be generated through struggle. These claims are linked to another set of claims about the social status of women in order to provide the basis for a distinctly feminist standpoint.

In addition to standpoint theory, many feminist epistemological explorations draw on the psychological theories of both Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan as the basis for an explanation of the deficiencies of dominant conceptions of rationality. Some have developed this analysis to argue that Cartesian dualism is rooted in the psychosexual development of men and represents a denial of the feminine. Chodorow’s early writing offered an important framework from which to develop such a perspective, offering as it did a psychological account of the ways in which the experience of mothering shapes male and female psyches differently. The epistemological implications of adopting this ‘object-relations’ theory are that such an analysis may provide an account of why the impersonal, objectifying, universalizing stance of rationality is so deeply associated with masculinity. It may also help to clarify what a more characteristically female epistemology comprises.

Postmodern writings problematize the unified notion of women’s experience found in these feminist epistemological writings and emphasize the importance of difference. Sensitivity to partiality of all standpoints, to the complexity of perception, to the fragility of the psyche, and to the ubiquity of power renders the more basic assertions of standpoint feminism woefully inadequate. Having accepted the notion

that different standpoints provide groundings for different epistemologies, one is obliged, so it is argued, to address the political issue of what constitutes a group unified enough to share a single standpoint. The extent to which feminist theories, of many different types, have subjected Enlightenment rationality to critique, and the searching way in which feminists have questioned the attempts within their own ranks to develop a different epistemological voice, leads some to suggest that feminism might, in these senses at least, be an intrinsically postmodern discourse.

Perhaps the central paradox running through the above debates has been that any attempt to define a feminist epistemology requires an acknowledgement that we seek recognition of a gendered identity that has itself, in Patricia Waugh’s words, ‘been constructed through the very culture and ideological formations which feminism seeks to challenge and dismantle’. The degree of self-reflexivity that this acknowledgement requires is more commonly associated with postmodernism than with feminism, but is increasingly common to both.

Concern about whether the enunciation of experience should be interpreted as ‘feminist’ touches upon a current feminist concern to distinguish methodological strategy from essentialist forms of feminism. The self, in current appeals to experience, is seen as a theoretical manoeuvre, not as a unifying principle. Most contemporary feminist appeals to experience as the foundation of epistemological claims are therefore complicated by a recognition of the inherently unstable and split character of all human subjectivity. Not even ‘the self’ offers a stable location from which to speak in the post-positivist lexicon. In sum, although there has indeed been a strong tendency within feminist theory to emphasize the importance of experience as foundational to epistemological standpoints, the divergent conceptions of both subjectivity and experience in the literature make Jones’s claim that this is a core feature of feminism so vague as to lack critical purchase.

**Equalities**

To assume that feminist theory necessarily involves a commitment to greater equality, without clarification of the conception of equality involved, is to downplay significantly one of the key debates that has characterized such theorizing in recent decades. In keeping with the ontological and epistemological developments noted above, the trend with this particular debate has been away from the aspiration for equality towards explorations and recognition of difference. The debate has revealed a significant range of perspectives within feminisms. As with the essentialism/social constructivism debate, clear-cut typologies are usually overdrawn, and many feminist theorists explicitly aim to reach beyond an equality/difference dichotomy. Nevertheless it is worth noting that the ‘difference’ arguments, arising from both essentialist and postmodern perspectives, have had a profound effect upon current feminist theorizing, such that Jones’s assumption, that a commitment to equality might be uncontroversially assumed as characteristic of all feminist stances, is simply not an adequate position to adopt.

---

For instance, Carole Pateman, Adriana Caveraro, and Susan James have all argued from differing perspectives that female sexual difference has been marginalized in Western liberal societies by a twofold strategy of exclusion and assimilation. Women are defined as different within a private sphere, or accepted as equal to (and the same as) men, in the public sphere. The public sphere becomes the site of abstract equality (populated by serial individuals), and the private the site of concrete differences (populated by people who differ in essence). In this context, theorists are concerned to question whether ‘equality’ can ever mean anything other than assimilation to a pre-existing and problematic norm of hegemonic masculinity.

There is a strong ‘maternalist’ school of thought which argues that it cannot, emphasizing the experience of maternity as a basis for women’s essential difference, focusing on the embodied, sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject, and stressing the political necessity of setting the notion of difference at the centre of political activity. There is also a ‘politics of difference’ school of thought drawing upon postmodern critiques of the liberal commitment to tolerance, whereby differences of identity have been claimed to be transcended in the political. The ‘maternalist’ and ‘politics of difference’ approaches are crucially distinct in that the latter emphasizes the contingency and fluidity of identities and argues for the recognition of a multiplicity of differences, but both share a scepticism about the liberal commitment to equality. It is this liberal commitment, assumed as a core feature of feminism by Jones, that has been so thoroughly and critically scrutinized within feminist debate.

Conclusion: feminisms

In this brief survey of recent ontological, epistemological, and normative debates within feminist theory, we have indicated that Jones’s first claim regarding the existence of three features common to all forms of feminism is misplaced, his disclaimer notwithstanding. In fact, each of the three features posited is highly contested. Given this, one must ask which, if any, schools of thought within current feminist theorizing are likely to be guilty of a limited focus upon women at the expense of a broader exploration of the ‘gender variables’ in which Jones is interested. Unsurprisingly, to the extent that this is a limitation of feminist writings, we argue that it applies only to that body of feminist thought which assumes essential sexual difference (the ontological claim), a ‘different voice’ based upon female experience (the epistemological claim), and a maternalist politics (the normative claim). It certainly does not apply to the significant, and currently dominant, schools of feminist thought which are explicitly critical of each of these three perspectives. Hence, Jones’s second claim, that ‘feminists’ have failed thus far to develop ‘an inclusive framing of gender and IR’ as a result of these three core features, may have some basis regarding a specific strand of feminist theorizing, but is simply unrepresentative of the totality of the field.

Jones’s third claim is that certain strands within feminist theorizing are more productive than others with regard to the discipline of international relations, as he

perceives it, with post-positivist feminisms cast in a decidedly negative light: ‘there is’, states Jones, ‘no evidence so far that investigations of this type could lead to a radically new theorizing of IR’. This is odd. For it is precisely this post-positivist strand of feminist theorizing which has done most to address Jones’s own concern regarding the potentially problematic tendency to collapse together the categories ‘women’ and ‘gender’, and which has challenged each of the ontological, epistemological, and normative assumptions specified by Jones as essentially feminist. What post-positivist feminist theorizing therefore offers is precisely the ‘focus on the gender variable’ which is inclusive of all gendered identities and of the complexities within and between them.

IRs

This section focuses on Jones’s criteria for evaluating feminist contributions to IR theory. We aim to demonstrate that the ‘classical tradition’, the measuring stick by which Jones evaluates feminist assumptions, is not only a narrow measure, but one that is misconceived as well.

On the mark? Jones’s assessment of feminist trends

Diagram A illustrates the criteria by which Jones concludes that feminist assumptions are limiting in what they can offer IR scholarship. In reading Jones we were struck by the way that he ‘boxes’ feminisms in IR, thereby demonstrating which writers can and cannot contribute to the discipline. He measures feminist IR against two criteria: (1) the degree to which feminists aim to supplement rather than to overturn the ‘classical tradition’; and relatedly, (2) the degree to which the epistemological assumptions of feminists can mesh with those of the ‘classical tradition’. Thus, pluses are assigned to feminists who intend to supplement this dominant paradigm of IR and who hold compatible epistemologies, and minuses are given to those who want radically to change mainstream IR and its positivist proclivities.

Ann Tickner and Cynthia Enloe are discussed favourably within Jones’s category of liberal feminists who do not see realism and feminist approaches to IR as ‘incompatible’. Tickner is attributed her first plus for her main concern being not to overturn realism, but instead to offer a ‘feminist reformulation’. The second plus is awarded because of her sympathy with objectivity. Despite her own critiques of objective forms of knowledge being linked with forms of male power and domination, Jones is pleased to find that Tickner does not see objectivity to be the problem as such, but rather its cultural association with masculinity. Enloe is also given a plus for choosing in her work to ‘supplement’ rather than ‘devalue or reject’ the ‘classical paradigm’. In adding the contributions of women and their experiences to considerations of diplomacy and military alliances, Enloe is enriching realist

10 Ibid., p. 417.
analysis of its central problematic: war and peace. What is important to note is that for Jones she is not challenging ‘what constitutes “the business of international politics”’. Thus Enloe gains another plus for not challenging what counts as knowledge in IR.

Elshtain, too, earns a plus from Jones for sharing a central concern with issues of war and peace with the ‘classical tradition’. She earns another plus for having ‘encouraged the advent of a more self-critical, sceptical stance in feminist analyses of peace and war’. By stressing the social construction of gender roles in war, Jones sees that Elshtain has undermined the force with which women can claim the political for themselves, hence the claim that a feminist standpoint has some kind of moral superiority. First, as Jones sees it, she puts a question mark over the capacity of feminists to couple a feminist standpoint with a women-oriented normative project. For Jones, this decoupling is essential to good research, as his remarks on not mixing partisanship and scholarship throughout the article attest. Second, and relatedly, such a constructivist understanding of women’s experience, as Jones sees it, opens up the capacity for feminist epistemology to amalgamate with the ‘classical tradition’ and assist it in supplementing other important areas for research into its central problematic. Thus, although writers like Helen Caldicott and Barbara Zanotti deserve a plus for their focus on questions of war and peace, they also rack up a minus for their essentialism—equating women with peace.

The writer who fares worst in Jones’s opinion is Christine Sylvester, earning a double-minus. The first is due to Sylvester’s adamant refusal of Robert Keohane’s

\[\text{Diagram A} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compatible (+)</th>
<th>Not Compatible (−)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supplement (+)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radicalize (−)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ann Tickner  
Cynthia Enloe  
Jean Elshtain | Christine Sylvester |
| (+,+) | (−,−) |
| Helen Caldicott  
Barbara Zanotti | |
| (+,−) | |

---

11 Ibid., pp. 415–16.
12 Ibid., p. 419.
13 Ibid., pp. 407, 409, 420.
idea of how feminists can best contribute to IR, as supplementors. A second is chalked up for Sylvester's post-positivism. As Jones states it, post-positivists regard the scientific rationalism linked with the 'classical tradition' as a kind of Original Sin from which all other evils flow. Epistemologically, there is no room for cooperation on the side of realists either, since they demand research agendas with explanatory power that Jones deems Sylvester unable to provide.

So if we plot these writers according to their pluses and minuses, we have the grid in diagram A. The $x$ axis indicates whether a feminist epistemology is deemed compatible with the epistemology of the 'classical tradition', the midpoint dividing positivism from post-positivism. The $y$ axis indicates whether a feminist approach intends to supplement or to overhaul the 'classical tradition'. Those feminists who fare best in Jones's schema sit in the upper left-hand quadrant. In the upper right-hand quadrant are feminists who, while writing on a topic of primary concern to realists, nonetheless begin from an epistemological foundation that leaves little scope for the 'classical tradition' to operate. The lower left-hand quadrant is empty, since Jones does not consider any epistemologically compatible feminists who aim to radicalize mainstream IR.

**Off the mark? A reassessment of Jones**

Despite attempts by Holsti to define the 'classical tradition' very broadly, it remains a very narrow and misconceived measure of the value of feminist approaches to IR. Like Keohane, Jones measures the value of feminist contributions by the extent to which they can work within the epistemological parameters of traditional IR. However, the full extent of feminist critiques seems to be lost on both Keohane and Jones, as they hold that there are worthy feminists who can work within the epistemology shared by neoliberal institutionalists and the 'classical tradition', and thereby enhance these approaches. However, it is our contention that feminists cannot play the enhancing role that Keohane and Jones want of them. They are incapable of doing so by the criteria set.

We see a central confusion in Jones which contributes to his lack of understanding of the depth of feminist critique of IR, and which has an important implication for what he wants from feminist approaches. The feminist constructivism regarding gender, which Jones values because it provides room—so he thinks—for an amalgamation with realism, does just the opposite: it challenges much of what realists hold epistemologically dear. This compromises the extent to which feminist approaches can be regarded as good partners to those operating within the 'classical tradition'. Feminist approaches to IR mean more than just adding women as a variable. Ironically, by Holsti's own criteria in *The Dividing Discipline*, the epistemological assumptions and methods they employ are radically different from the 'classical tradition' in terms of (1) its central problematic, and (2) its normative orientation.

First, the central problematic—that is, what counts as knowledge in IR—is widened to include questions of global inequalities and oppressions. This means incorporating within IR the examination of structures of power in international politics based on gender relations. This radically alters the possibility for incorporating feminist work into the ‘classical tradition’. As Holsti sees it, the ‘classical tradition’ is centrally concerned with the causes of war and the conditions of peace, and while methodological changes do not necessarily signal a paradigm shift, he finds that a shift in problematic does. For example, Holsti sees Global Society theory, in particular, as an alternative paradigm to the ‘classical tradition’, because of its epistemological shift in emphasis onto human suffering, a shift not dissimilar to the one that feminists are suggesting. Connected with this shift are other crucial differences for Holsti: that the units studied become much more diffuse and the nation-states system becomes unrecognizable. The kind of anecdotal work on the public and private lives of men and women that feminists pursue, not only at state and system levels, but at the sub-state level, too, would be up for the same kind of criticism that Holsti lands on global-society theorists: the problematic is so diffuse that ‘it is impossible to develop guidelines and priorities for research’. The constructivist feminists for whom Jones has some sympathy are not wedded, as he is, to a concern for the variables that are most significant, testable, and workable within a clear research agenda. Given that Jones is working from Holsti’s framework, it is remarkable that he attributes to them a supplementing capacity at all.

Second, implicit within this broader understanding of the questions from which we should begin enquiry is a normative orientation towards redressing these inequalities and oppressions. Of this Jones is well aware, since it is one of the three essential features he attributes to feminist approaches. However, constructivism, while indeed putting a question mark over the essentialist rationale for privileging women in the arena of the political, in no way decouples a feminist standpoint from its normative agenda, as Jones would like to have it. If anything, constructivists’ understanding of social realities being ‘made’, as opposed to being natural, reinforces an orientation towards the normative, since the ‘unmaking’ of inequitable social realities is possible. Again, given that Jones is working from Holsti, it is odd that he is so disposed against the normative. Holsti clearly acknowledges that the central problematic of the ‘classical tradition’ arises out of a deeply held normative concern. His only problem with the normative arises when it deviates from the concerns which define the ‘classical tradition’, and this, not the fact that feminists have a normative agenda, is the reason Holsti would argue that feminist approaches are limited.

If we acknowledge the extent of the feminist critique, accurately understood as an alternative epistemological terrain and claiming more than a supplementary role for itself, then the result is something that looks more like diagram B.

---

17 Ibid., p. 60.
18 Jones seems to identify realism categorically with positivism, understood as empiricism. This is a serious misconception. Indeed, Holsti sees contained within the classical tradition various philosophical, historical, and quantitative methods (see Holsti, *Dividing Discipline*, ch. 2).
Terrell Carver et al.

Diagram B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compatible (+)</th>
<th>Not Compatible (−)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supplement (+)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radicalize (−)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| (+,+) | (+,−) |
| Ann Cynthia, Jean Helen, Barbara Christine | Tickner, Enloe, Elshtain, Caldicott, Zanotti, Sylvester |

| (−,+)| (−,−) |

While it is true that the writers previously placed in the top left-hand and right-hand squares in diagram A hope to fill certain gaps of analysis within the ‘classical tradition’, we do not see this as sufficient to warrant their placement in the top half of this diagram. What also stands out as different in diagram B is that we have refused to place these writers firmly in either the lower left-hand or lower right-hand quadrant. This has to do with a question mark hanging over the work of feminists across the social sciences with respect to their relationship to positivism. Feminists want to be able to point to the real, material conditions of women’s oppression. However, as mentioned above, they recognize the degree to which objectivism has a nasty track record. Nonetheless, feminists question just how far down the interpretivist route they want to go. While a writer like Sylvester is less concerned by interpretivism, she nonetheless, within her ‘postmodern feminism’, wants to point to a knowledge of gender. Thus we have placed Sylvester and the other writers within a range sitting across the positivist/post-positivist divide, and it is that divide which decides compatibility with the ‘classical tradition’ for Jones. Each of the writers can be shown to have views on this issue, but as we do not see it as a concern of this article to trace their differences, we have depicted the range in this way simply in order to illustrate what has been said above: (1) that these feminists cannot embrace the positivism that realists do; and (2) that constructivism has strong affinities with post-positivism.19

---

19 Jones recognizes this second point because he sees that when constructivism and post-positivism combine, that is when things get dangerous; see Jones, ‘Does “Gender” Make the World Go Round?’, p. 409.
Conclusion: IRs

The exercise of charting these two diagrams is all done for the purpose of illustrating the extent to which Jones's criteria for judging the limits of feminist contributions to IR are problematic and political. They are problematic because Jones does not fully understand the ‘reach’ of feminist critiques of the ‘classical tradition’, even among those writers to whom he is most sympathetic, and because he is therefore holding feminists up for evaluation against the standards of the very paradigm which they are criticizing, and into which they cannot be assimilated. They are highly political because they contribute to the disciplining of feminists in IR as ‘goodies and baddies’, a phenomenon Cynthia Weber identifies in Keohane’s article on the feminist standpoint.20

Finally, Jones’s measure is also remarkably narrow. It is derived from North American approaches which equate IR with the realist/neorealist tradition and with critics sympathetic to it. There is a wider range of international theory literature which has many links and affinities with the critiques of mainstream IR that the feminists have unleashed. In order to evaluate the contributions of approaches critical of ‘classical’ IR, such as those offered by feminists, we need a more rigorous and informed engagement, and a critique against more appropriate criteria, than anything which Jones attempts.

Masculinities

It might be said that the most positive and constructive aspect of Jones’s work is his move to ‘expand’ the notion of gender to include issues in IR relating to men and masculinity. In this section we examine Jones’s own understanding of how gender should be understood, how he thinks research on men and masculinity should be done, and how IR would look, in his view, if it were more ‘balanced’ with respect to gender.21 Our contention is that Jones is unaware of the way that ‘gender’ has developed as a social science concept in the last hundred years, unaware of a very large and complex literature on men and masculinities that has already addressed many issues relevant to IR, and unaware that he has constructed his own work (on non-elite males) against a feminist ‘other’, largely of his own invention. This so drastically limits what he is able to say that he merely restates the obvious, and therefore misses a considerable opportunity to contribute to the discipline, perhaps indeed to transform it.

Strategy/Methodology

Instead of searching out a research literature that informs his interest in men and masculinity, Jones fails to look much beyond the feminist IR that he has singled out

for criticism. Presumably his goal is to bring material on men and masculinity into IR by getting to ‘concrete matters’ and ‘more narratives, more details, more case-studies’. However, his research methodology in this area relies on ‘intuition and common sense’ alone, and while they have a role to play in research, they are hardly more than a start.

Jones also appeals for ‘an overarching theorizing of gender’, and claims that this restates ‘the basic project called for here—that is, more balanced and fertile theories of the gender variable’s operation in international relations’. This ‘balance’ then becomes ‘a blending of gendered perspectives’, ‘a necessary first step towards synthesis’.22 Perhaps this is just careless writing, but it does leave us in the dark. Is Jones’s project an empirical survey? an overarching theory? Is the theory a synthesis? a blend? of what? Is he supplementing feminism with case-studies of male victimization? or supplementing IR with insights about men as ‘a gender’? What does he mean by ‘gender’ and (or?) the ‘gender variable’, anyway?

This last is the crucial question, as it seems that Jones has no clear and consistent view of ‘gender’ as other than some undifferentiated (though rigidly binary) concept of ‘sex’, i.e., man/woman, male/female, masculine/feminine. This would seem to follow from his general (though again not consistent) lack of sympathy with ‘constructivist’ positions, to which he attributes a ‘deep suspicion even of the basic labels of sex and gender’.23 Jones may or may not be naive in sticking with his implicit theorization of gender, but he has given himself little help in arguing that such a narrow conception is sufficient these days for any purpose, even an empirical survey in IR incorporating the ‘gender variable’.

Gender/Men

Unknown to Jones, there is a consensus in social sciences on the history of men’s studies, and on what sort of concepts and theories make it work. Indeed men as an object of study, i.e., men as gendered rather than as generic ‘man’, has a history dating from the days before feminism was an academically recognized point of view. Currently opinion is very divided about the relationship between feminism and men as object of study, and competing disciplinary perspectives (e.g., gay and lesbian studies, cultural studies, women’s studies) further complicate the picture. A (presumed) basic distinction between biological/physiological sex (male/female) and psychological/social expressions thereof (masculinity/femininity) now seems familiar, though Jones never states this clearly. This kind of distinction emerged with the development of social science in the late nineteenth century, and actual investigations—which followed, of course, from ‘frameworks’ or ‘models’ or hypotheses that varied between psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, anthropology, criminology, etc.—really got under way from that point. There was an obvious presumption of ‘normality’ in much of this work, in that ‘normal’ males evinced masculinity, and ‘normal’ females femininity, albeit with some allowance for historical and cultural variations within this basic binary.

22 Ibid., pp. 423–4.
23 Ibid., p. 409.
On the one hand, social scientists often created categories of ‘deviancy’, in which psychology and behaviour were said to diverge from the expected linkage of maleness with masculine behaviour and social roles, and femaleness with feminine behaviour and social roles. This generally incorporated the rather different notions of resembling the opposite sex in terms of behaviour, and choosing the same sex in terms of orientation. Occasionally in participant-observation studies ‘normality’ and ‘deviancy’ in both regards was questioned. On the other hand, when other aspects of individual character and social identities were studied, concepts of sex-role orientation were occasionally critiqued or at least elaborated. Thus if men were studied because they were working-class or black, it sometimes emerged that their masculinity differed from an expected norm, so loosening the assumed link between sex as biology and gender as behaviour, and blurring the expected categories of normality and deviance. Then, when second-wave feminism undertook a serious questioning of femininity and of women’s roles in terms of behaviour and expectations, and began exploring issues in female sexuality hitherto uninvestigated within male-dominated social sciences, the ‘sex-role’ approach, sketched above, largely evaporated.

What replaced sex-role theory in relation to men was a ‘new sociology of masculinity’, announced in the mid-1980s and concerned with the historically evolving relations of power which constitute a ‘sex/gender system’. This system is theorized as a highly complex and continuously changing pattern of relations concerning reproduction and sexuality that varies with race/ethnicity, class, immigrant or minority status, religious or linguistic background, and any number of other factors. These variations are located within societies as well as between them, and are understood as constantly changing in a flux of personal and political negotiations. Moreover, in this ‘new sociology’ men and masculinity are generally treated and critiqued as privileged categories in society, because ‘woman’ has been shown in feminist analysis to be a category of oppression.24

However, this is not to deny the importance of competition and oppression amongst men in constituting distinct hierarchies of masculinities. On the contrary, the ‘new’ men’s studies and studies of masculinities (plural) are about precisely this variability and variety of social and personal experience of power relations among men themselves, as well as about the normative and transformative agendas that contemporary sexual politics continually generates in response. This sexual politics of men and masculinities could of course go any number of different ways: for instance, feminist-friendly and ‘gender-bending’, or ‘male-centred’ with overtones of backlash. In the better sort of studies it is made explicit that male–male power relations are permeated with concepts of ‘woman’ and femininity, even if the situations under scrutiny are ones in which women do not physically figure. Situations that are ‘all boys together’ are likely to be unintelligible without explicit consideration of a crucial defining feature: ‘no girls allowed’.

The above sketch shows the richness and importance of gender studies, as it has developed from around the turn of the century through to the 1980s. While there is an element of ‘social constructivism’ in the ‘new sociology of masculinity’, the conceptualizations developed therein could well be compatible with the kind of empirical work that Jones seems to have in mind. This brief history, as we have

recounted it,\textsuperscript{25} does not depend on the more radical concepts of performativity, representation, fragmentation of the self, and truth/knowledge regimes more associated with postmodernism (in various modes) than with the descriptive ‘balancing’ in gender theory and the normative project in IR that Jones seems to have in mind. Jones has strongly criticized feminists in IR for creating ‘a new logos-centrism’ based on partial and unexamined concepts of ‘(elite) male actions and (hegemonic) masculinity’.\textsuperscript{26} Yet from what he has produced so far,\textsuperscript{27} it is not at all clear that he knows anything more about the ‘male/masculine realm’ than he claims that they do.

\textit{Patriarchy/Feminism}

In terms of his critique of feminist IR, Jones has left us with a number of puzzles: How, after apparently criticizing feminists for mixing their normative engagement with their work in IR, does he then conceptualize and justify his own evident normative engagement with men's issues? When he refers to ‘our’ normative engagement, who is ‘we’? Again, after evidently criticizing feminists for requiring ‘where I am coming from’ accounts of scholarly authors, how does he then invoke an authorial ‘I’ and employ ‘intuition’ (presumably his own)? And finally, Jones seems to imply that feminists have failed in gendering IR because of an apparent unconcern with men-as-victims. But is this criticism of feminists indeed at all germane to the project of putting men and masculinities, i.e. a gender issue, on the map as a mainstream IR ‘variable’?\textsuperscript{28}

Jones’s strategy in critique is genuinely odd: on the one hand, as we have seen, feminist criticisms of a supposed ‘standard’ view in IR are merely listed, and apparently criticized for their deviance, rather than substantively criticized from a well-developed and consistent position. On the other hand, the gendering of IR with respect to men and masculinities, under consideration here, is arguably an important lacuna in any position, whether ‘standard’ or feminist, yet Jones is apparently unaware of how insights from an entire field of research could be mobilized even within a brief overview.

Jones’s research agenda does list a dozen or so important topics that might be investigated in IR.\textsuperscript{29} Curiously, though, he reproduces the fault that he claims to find in feminists, in that his ‘contribution’ amounts merely to stacking male bodies and male suffering up against female bodies and female suffering. Indeed there is an odious and otiose discourse of ‘fairness’ operating in Jones’s ‘Gender’ article by which he seems to accuse feminists of ‘unfairness’ in focusing on women-as-victims,


\textsuperscript{26} Jones, ‘Does “Gender” Make the World Go Round?’, pp. 420–1.


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 423–6.
whereas he apparently sees himself justly redressing their supposed sins of omission. For most of us, though, feminisms’ predominant focus on women is hardly a surprise, and indeed it is self-consciously a response to the comparative (and still continuing) invisibility of women.

Moreover, Jones explicitly claims to focus on the ‘fissures in patriarchy’, as if this were some kind of achievement in itself, and one-in-the-eye for feminist IR.30 Leaving aside the obvious immaturity of this outlook, and Jones’s inability to handle normative concepts of any kind in a credible way, the real sin of omission here is his unawareness that it is patriarchy, meaning a structure of male dominance, that produces the male victims he is interested in. The gendered character of armies is not just that they are composed mostly of men (and indeed define themselves as such), and that in many cases most of their immediate targets are men (though of course they kill many women as well), and that there are further male hierarchies in international politics that do the same or very similar things, but that masculinity/ies as a global phenomenon itself constitutes a dense site where meanings are constructed, power relations are constituted, and violence is perpetrated. Putting the ‘gender variable’ to work as a supplement to victimology (itself a misconceived view of the feminist contribution to IR), as Jones tries to do, misses out what anybody’s IR ought to be doing: looking analytically and imaginatively at the who, how, and why of power in the international context.

**Conclusion: Masculinities**

Jones attempts to supplement IR with gender by correcting feminist IR. Instead of doing that, it would have been more apposite for him to study what patriarchy does to men, as power-holders (which IR feminists in fact do)31 and not just as victims (where—as feminists have claimed—they are more readily visible in the public record than are women). Doing this kind of study on men and masculinities would have profound consequences for the way ‘the state’, ‘state security’, ‘balance of power’, and numerous other ‘standard’ IR concepts are defined, understood and even ‘operationalized’. If this is what Jones has in mind by a ‘rewriting’ of ‘classical IR’, then it would certainly be transformative. It might also be the case that many feminists would find an IR incorporating this kind of ‘gender awareness’ a more stimulating and supportive environment than the one to which Jones ascribes so much value and so many achievements. However, despite the obvious advantages for the IR ‘mainstream’ of any public engagement with feminist IR, for which Jones is owed some thanks, it is basically perverse for him to imagine that the gendering of IR requires a critique of IR feminists of the kind that he attempts, given the obvious deficiencies of ‘mainstream’ IR in raising issues of gender relating to women, let alone men.

---

30 Ibid., pp. 425, 427.
31 See, amongst others, Jean Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York, 1987); Judith Stiehm (ed.), *Women’s View of the Political World of Men* (Dobbs Ferry, NY, 1984); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, CA, 1990), and *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley, CA, 1993); and Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (eds.), *The Man Question in International Relations* (Boulder, CO, 1998). Unlike Jones, recent writers in feminist IR are aware of the literature on masculinities as cited in footnote 25 above.