

B.A. (Prog) II nd Year (IVth Semester)
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Topic:- Feminist Perspectives of J. Ann Tickner

According to feminism, the discipline of international relations (IR) a decade ago had, and indeed still has, connotations similar to 'maleness'. This maleness is not based strictly on individual personalities, but on a 'hegemonic masculinity' that expresses what masculine men should be in opposition to femininities, which are less valued. Women are not a strong factor in the discipline, and knowledge gained from women's experiences also remains at the periphery of the discipline's analysis. It is clear to Professor J. Ann Tickner that there are gendered perceptions in IR, hidden by purported 'gender neutrality' and 'objectivity'. In other words, although women and gender are both important parts of the daily operation and scholarship of IR, this presence is neither debated nor analysed by most theorists. The goal then of feminist IR is two-fold: to recognise gender where it exists in IR, and to move beyond gendered ideas into collaborative scholarship. In this way, feminist IR theory challenges other strands of IR theory on a number of levels, contributing to the major theoretical debates in the discipline and raising new areas of analysis.

One of Tickner's most famous journal articles was the piece "You Just Don't Understand" (*International Studies Quarterly* (1997) 41, 611-632), which critiqued mainstream international relations theorists for the omission of gender from their theory and practice. Whilst mainstream scholars argued that feminists should develop scientific, falsifiable theories, Tickner argued against this assertion, claiming that it misunderstood one of the premises of feminist IR. Most feminist IR theory takes a strongly deconstructivist approach to knowledge, arguing that theories reflect the gendered social positioning of their authors; they therefore questioned positivist ("scientific") methods for obscuring the gendered politics of knowledge construction. She favors a social, "bottom-up" method of analysis that makes the role of women in IR visible, as opposed to the usual scientific methodologies that are "top-down" and focus on traditionally masculinist subjects, including men, money, and war. Feminist approaches to international relations are a phenomenon of the post-Cold War period. Feminist scholarly research began in the 1980s in various academic disciplines, from literature to psychology to history. According to feminism, the discipline of international relations (IR) a decade ago had, and indeed still has, similar connotations to 'maleness'. This maleness is not based strictly on individual personalities, but on a 'hegemonic masculinity' that expresses what masculine men should be in opposition to femininities, which are less valued. Women are not a strong factor in the discipline, and knowledge gained from women's experiences also remains at the periphery of the discipline's analysis. It is clear to Professor J. Ann Tickner that there are gendered perceptions in IR, hidden by purported 'gender neutrality' and 'objectivity'. In other words, although women and gender are both important parts of the daily operation and scholarship of IR, this presence is neither debated nor analysed by most theorists. The goal then of feminist IR is two-fold: to recognise gender where it exists in IR, and to move beyond gendered ideas into collaborative scholarship. In this way, feminist IR theory challenges other strands of IR theory on a number of levels, contributing to the major theoretical debates in the discipline and raising new areas of analysis.

J. Ann Tickner is one of the most visible scholars in the field of feminist International Relations (IR). Widely acknowledged as having contributed to the founding of the subfield with her seminal book *Gender in International Relations* (1992), she has helped introduce feminist approaches to the IR scholarly community, and has been recognized for her outstanding contributions by being elected president of the International Studies Association (ISA) in 2006. Thus, when Tickner appears with a new book, it is worth noting. *A Feminist Voyage through International Relations* assembles a selection of Tickner's articles and book chapters since 1988 and definitely should not be missed. Those who have followed feminist IR will be familiar with many of the pieces presented here. Bringing together the different articles it shows the development of Tickner's thinking over time, her responses to burning issues in different time periods, and her reaction to critics and others that have engaged with her work. The book paints the trajectory of her thinking about gender in IR, which must be placed within the trajectory of the making of the field itself. With a beginning, a middle, and an end, the book makes for highly satisfying reading that captures core arguments and debates in feminist International Relations.

As with many theories, "feminist theory" reflects a wide range of perspectives generating many internal debates concerning how it should be represented. As Diana Thorburn notes, "there can never be a truly singular voice of feminist foreign policy simply because of the diversity of views within feminism itself." However, a brief look at some relevant facets of the discipline can be seen through Lorraine Codes' summary of two salient areas within feminist IR theory, standpoint feminism and radical feminism. Standpoint theory considers how "the gendered construction of knowledge [helps to] understand traditional topics in international relations" and is "alerting us to the idea that gender may be structuring how we think in the international context." Author Martin Griffiths classifies feminist scholar J. Ann Tickner as a standpoint feminist. Before even addressing existing IR theory, Griffiths first argues that the purpose and definition of 'theory' is in itself male-centered, because it is "oppressively normative rather than conjectural and analytic." Simply put, the processes of forming and learning theory is constructed around on automatically-accepted ideas of what is standard and normal, rather than first challenging the 'norm' and questioning if the 'standard' is objective enough. In this case, 'theory' lacks female perspective because it is not objectively sought at the onset of formulating ideas. Tickner argues that IR is gendered to "marginalize women's voices," and stresses "that women have knowledge, perspectives and experiences that should be brought to bear on the study of international relations." For example, Tickner would argue that security, a main topic in IR, should not only be understood as "defending the state from attack," but should also consider that security for women "might be different because women are more likely to be attacked by men they

know, rather than strangers from other states.” In other words, in contrast to traditional IR views that view security as protecting the state from other states, feminists argue the topic of security should address acts of rape and violence, not only from foreign perpetrators, but from their own fellow citizens as well. Feminists would also add that occurrences of rape increase during times of war, and is even used as a method of ethnic cleansing among the rivalries within their state, yet would never enter into typical IR discussions that focus solely on state-to-state interaction, simply because IR discussion traditionally remain focused on states as the key actors. Thus, the topic of security shows how gender consideration, excluded from the very beginning of the discussion, results in policymaking that would be subsequently exclusive of, and likely detrimental to, women. Prior to discussing any IR topic, standpoint feminist IR theory would first challenge those participating in the discussion, and those defining the key terms and issues, by critically asking them if the normative perspectives and working vocabulary are broad enough to effectively accommodate issues affecting women.

1. **Gendering world politics**
2. **Troubled Encounters: Feminism meets international relations**
3. **Gendered Dimensions of war, peace and security**
4. **Understanding insecurity**