IR and the (Re)Making of Hegemonic Masculinity

Asking the question "What role does international relations play in the shaping, defining, or legitimating of masculinity or masculinities?" entails making a shift from the standard practice of taking identities (whether gender or otherwise) as givens—which might then inform international relations, toward a more sophisticated, constructionist view that sees cross-cutting influences in both directions. The simple answer to the question is that international relations has played an important part in not only reflecting and legitimating specific masculinities, but also in constructing and defining them. In particular, this book has argued that the discipline of IR is heavily implicated in the construction and promotion of Anglo-American models of hegemonic masculinity—and that this role continues in connection with globalization. Particular models of masculinity are hidden in the methods; they inhabit the theories as shadowy subtexts to the stated subject matter, and rivalries between different masculinities inform paradigmatic and methodological debates—all in a glamorous international arena that is symbolically separated off from the rest of society as an all-male sphere.

Like other feminist approaches, this perspective has refused to accept in-

ternational/domestic and public/private boundaries to politics as relevant. In this case, it is because they obscure the relationships between the international and the private, and render the question of gendered constructions of identity outside the remit of international relations. Such boundaries both construct international relations as a masculine space and then hide the crucial role that its theory and practices play in the construction of specifically masculine identities.

The approach taken here has also refused to accept that academic discourse and popular culture are discrete areas of life. It has explored some intersections between the two to illuminate their mutually reinforcing role in constructing the symbolic dimension of the gender order and gender identities. This is not to overplay the influence of academic discourse (or popular culture), or to suggest that academic discourse determines gender identities. The outcome depends on the degree of congruity between the discursive fields of academic IR and popular culture, on the one hand, and the institutional processes and embodied practices that they inform and reflect, on the other. It also depends on varied readership strategies and processes of identification and negotiation. Although these are not explored in any detail here, the ubiquity of the constructions of hegemonic masculinity that have been revealed, and the congruence between their representations in academic discourse and popular culture, point to an extremely influential, culturally hegemonic role for the representation of elite Anglo-American masculinities with glamorized international or global connections.

While deriving insights from feminism on the construction of gender identities and the nature of masculinism, masculine gender identities have been theorized here in a more fluid way than is generally found in feminist literature. Relationships between masculinities have been characterized as not only hierarchical, but also as involving much rivalry, jostling for position, change, and synthesis. In the micropolitics of masculinities, multiple interpretive wars are waged using strategies of masculinization and feminization, a few of which have been mapped above. Thus masculinism can be seen to involve not just the elevation of masculinity over femininity, but also the elevation of some types of masculinity over others. This type of theorizing has the advantage of capturing some of the complexity of gender politics. It avoids both an overly static picture of what is actually an ever-changing reality and the dualism that has dogged much feminist scholar-

ship. It can also avoid the pitfalls of voluntarism, on the one hand, and cultural determinism, on the other, through careful attention to historical context and an awareness of the ongoing interplay between all three dimensions of embodiment, institutional practices, and discursive formations in the construction of gender identities. It is to be hoped that future feminist theorizing of gender identities will continue to move away from static conceptions and toward more open-ended analyses of the processes of gender identification. The perspective developed here is hopefully a step in this direction, and although the focus of this book has been on the relationship between masculinities and international relations, the approach is intended to have more widespread applications.

Mapping Anglo-American Hegemonic Masculinity

A contribution to the project of exploring the politics of masculinities is the mapping of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity. The ideal types of citizen-warrior and bourgeois-rational man, and to a lesser extent Judeo-Christian patriarch and honor/patronage aristocrat, first encountered through a fairly brief examination of some of the literature on gender and masculinity, have proved useful guides to the various constructions of Anglo-American masculinities in both IR and *The Economist.* Indeed, they have matched so well the various representations of masculinity that have been discussed here that it seems clear that Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity is indeed largely made up of shifting combinations of elements from these particular ideal types. While the bourgeois-rational model may be in the ascendant, it is important not to underplay the influence of the others, which continue to provide an elitist element to contemporary constructions, even as the twenty-first century opens.

As well as being constructed out of elements from various historically produced ideal types, contemporary Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity continues to be shaped by an encounter with the "international" realm beyond the borders of the state and/or "civilization." In the past, this encounter, in the British case, took the form of colonialism, wherein the identity of the Victorian English Gentleman was defined in relation to a global hierarchy of racialized masculinities. In the case of the United States, it took the form of internal colonialism and life at the "frontier." The particular point that this book has made (reinforced by the textual analysis of *The*

Economist) in connection with this history is that encounters with the "international" continue to play a crucial part in shaping Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity. In the era of the cold war, spy culture and the iconic figure of James Bond—an international consumer playboy—drew on notions of aristocratic leisure to provide a reincarnation of the English Gentleman and to promote the world as an "exotic" consumer playground. The racial hierarchy of colonialism was replayed in a more muted and subtle form. In the post–cold war context, it is "globalization" that takes the place of colonialism and the "frontier." The discourse of globalization as it appears in *The Economist* continually borrows and recycles "frontier" imagery. Such a discourse has tipped the emphasis further toward the U.S. rather than English inflection of this hegemonic masculinity during the period under investigation. In the pages of *The Economist,* the "frontier," together with competitive fitness and informality of style, were by the mid 1990s invoked more often than patriarchal privilege or gentlemanly codes. This partly reflected a reconfiguration of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity in conjunction with economic restructuring, workplace changes, and new management styles, but also reflected a more local phenomenon (given that *The Economist* was and is a British publication): the Americanization of the City of London and of the culture of international finance.

The analysis of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity offered here has not covered in depth the extent to which its relationship to women and subordinate masculinities may also be reconfigured through globalization. In the textual analysis of *The Economist,* some contradictory trends have been noted: the colonization by masculinity of what was previously regarded as feminine and the concurrent feminization of hierarchy; a cross-fertilization between Anglo-American and Japanese cultures of masculinity; the appearance of progressive advertisements that show Asians and blacks and women in powerful positions; and an ambiguous, although apparently improving attitude to both women and feminism. These are questions that merit further research. The only safe conclusions that can be drawn from the observations made here are that both hegemonic masculinity and gender relations in general remain in a state of flux and confusion. However, if, as in the past, Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity can successfully incorporate new elements while retaining its elitist international connotations and connections to the past, then any changes in the form of

relationships with women and subordinate groups of men are likely to re-
main peripheral or relatively insignificant in terms of removing substantive
gender inequalities.

The analysis of contemporary changes to hegemonic masculinities
made here has also focused exclusively on the challenges of global econom-
ic restructuring. This is largely as a result of the choice of *The Economist*
newspaper as the representative of popular culture and its cross-fertilization
with the academic world, and also reflects the dominance of the theme of
economic restructuring in IR discussions of globalization. This is perhaps
unfortunate, if it gives the impression of a perspective founded on econom-
ic determinism, where changes in the gender order are seen as purely reac-
tions to economic stimuli. It is perhaps worth mentioning that economic
change is just one strand in the flux over hegemonic masculinities with in-
ternational relevance. Others, which have not been pursued here, include
global environmental issues and environmental movements that have pro-
duced some deliberate attempts to reform or transcend hegemonic mas-
culinity (Connell 1995) and responses to the pressures of four decades of
second-wave feminism (Segal 1990).

A third strand, suggested by cyberfeminists, is that the conceptualization
of the relationship between man and machine is undergoing a profound
transformation; this is in connection with the spread of computer networks.
It is argued that while men, viewed as autonomous, separate and self-con-
tained selves, previously wielded tools and machines to refashion nature,
now, operating computer consoles, men are as nodes inserted into comput-
er networks and are no longer individually the sole and separate instigators
of action (Plant 1997). Meanwhile, developments in biology, biotechnology,
and medicine are also challenging the traditional inside/outside and
self/not-self boundaries of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity (Har-
away 1991; 1997). If these and other developments represent a cultural shift
as large and significant as cyberfeminists suggest, then it has important im-
plications for the bourgeois model of hegemonic masculinity and its analo-
gous "state as rational actor" model. Given that coherent worldviews cross
disciplinary boundaries, if men are no longer seen as autonomous rational
actors it will not be long before states are also viewed differently. On the
other hand, bourgeois-rational masculinity has undergone a number of al-
terations over the last hundred years or so, such as dropping the nineteenth-

century emphasis on sexual continence. It may merely be being reconfigured in a new variation, as biotechnological developments and the internet are used to further enhance the fantasy of disembodiment (Hooper 1999b).

Meanwhile, cyberfeminists themselves make liberal use of postmodern technostrategic language in their attempts to subvert new technologies for feminist ends. As Carol Cohn found in another era, using technostrategic language can be very enjoyable, as "talking about nuclear weapons is fun. I am serious. The words are fun to say; they are racy, sexy, snappy. You can throw them around in rapid fire succession. They are quick, clean, light; they trip off the tongue" (Cohn 1987, 714). Such language offered distance, feeling of control, and escape from victimhood with regard to nuclear weapons. In the case of cyberfeminists, postmodern technoscientific language could provide similar pleasures, and detract from the fact that, as Donna Haraway (one of the leading promoters of the feminist use of such language) herself admits, new technologies are being fashioned in profoundly masculinist ways (Haraway 1997). Cyberfeminists are trying to subvert technoscientific language to feminist ends. Nonetheless, the language they use is not so far removed from the type of postmodern technolanguage that I have criticized James Der Derian for reproducing (see chapter 3), although the ends to which it is put are very different.[1]

Postpositivists and Masculinism

The continuing salience of the encounter between Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity and the "international" or the "global" signals the importance of international relations as a site for the examination of contemporary changes and challenges to this type of masculinity. As this book has argued, the predominantly Anglo-American discipline of IR has a role to play, not least in helping to construct and promote the new forms of hegemonic masculinity associated with globalization. It seems ironic that some postpositivist approaches to IR, which are otherwise critical of the discursive role of mainstream IR in constructing elitist and exclusionary boundaries, could be at the forefront of such developments.

The overall perspective of the book is generally sympathetic to postpositivist approaches. Like other postpositivists, I have argued against the view that given identities go on to construct international relations in any

straightforward way. Rather than adopting the scientific language of cause and effect that is so common in IR discourse, the emphasis throughout this book has been on the micropolitics of power and the cross-cutting influences between IR, popular culture, and gender identities. Positivist methodologies are incapable of capturing such cross-cutting influences, because if gender identity is simultaneously a *cause* and an *effect* of the practices of international relations, then it cannot be treated as a "variable" whose influence can be isolated.[2] If, furthermore, as argued here, academic theories are themselves implicated in the production of masculine identities, then standard historical methods that aspire to academic objectivity are also inadequate to the task. The diffuse conception of power; the interest in the power/knowledge nexus; the view that theories are implicated in the worlds they purport to describe; the refusal of disciplinary boundaries; the acknowledgement of indeterminacy; the interest in popular culture—all these are characteristics of the perspective adopted here and are recognizable as aspects of postpositivist thinking.

However, postpositivist contributions to IR still tend to perpetuate the abstract rationalism of Western philosophy, and many remain gender-blind. Through the examination of some of the intersections between academic discourse and popular culture, some postmodern scholarship has also been shown to resonate with a masculinist discourse of globalization that promotes a new, informal, technocratic form of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity. This is an important point because it undermines some poststructuralist claims to be radically undermining the disciplinary power structures of modernity. Clearly, a number of nonfeminist poststructuralists are failing to disrupt, effectively, one of the major disciplinary power structures of modernity—that of gender difference and gender inequality. Not only are they in fact failing to challenge the gender order, but in the case of contributors such as Der Derian and Virilio, their playfully ironic technolanguage games are probably actually helping to update and reinvigorate an Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity. What is being challenged, in gender terms, is not the overall disciplinary effect of modern IR discourse, but rather the specific, arguably outdated, models of hegemonic masculinity that inhabit modern perspectives within the discipline. This challenge merely perpetuates existing masculinist rivalries, albeit with a new twist, and offers continuity with modern perspectives in IR, rather than the promised

radical upheaval. This has implications not only for the unequal position of women, but also does little to help marginalized groups of men and subordinate masculinities.

Postpositivists are attuned to the discursive role of language, and claim to be reflectivist. Der Derian and Shapiro have themselves explicitly discussed intertextuality and the cross-cutting influences between IR and popular culture (Der Derian 1989; Shapiro 1989a; 1989b). Therefore, they could easily reflect a little more on the gendered implications of the language they choose to use, and on its intertextualities with a popular masculinist discourse of globalization. It is a testament to the entrenched masculinism of the discipline that this would probably adversely affect their careers.[3] Nonetheless, it is a grave disappointment to find that at a time of considerable flux and change in gender terms, a number of postpositivist contributors to IR are either continuing in a disembodied rationalist tradition or even helping to forge new versions of hegemonic masculinity, rather than taking the opportunity to challenge gender inequalities between women and men.

Feminist Challenges

The arguments put forward here suggest that the masculinism of IR is even deeper and more entrenched than feminist commentators have so far revealed: the discipline has constructed an all-male space for the production of masculinities, and it is involved in embodying and promoting particular constructions of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity, which have wider cultural relevance and influence. Even some postpositivist critics continue in the tradition of masculine rivalries and promoting new forms of hegemonic masculinity. If the Anglo-American dominated discipline of IR so thoroughly represents and helps to construct the hegemonic masculinity of the sole remaining superpower, reproducing all the elitism and internal complexities and rivalries of that hegemonic masculinity, then it could appear futile for feminists to try to reform the discipline—and a demoralizingly uphill task to transform it into something else.

However, this pessimistic view may underestimate the impact that even apparently marginal attention to gender issues could have on the constitution of IR as a masculine space, and consequently on its role in the production and reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity. While the masculinist edifice of IR might seem more complex, more comprehensive, and

even more mutually reinforcing than before, perhaps it is also more vulnerable to disruption than some feminists have supposed, and the main focus of this book has implied. The vulnerability of hegemonic codes of masculinity to a feminist challenge may be underestimated. Although I have concentrated on the representation of masculinities and their links to masculine identities, changes in the representation of women and feminism could help transform the environment within which struggles between different masculinities are played out. The power of such struggles over masculine identities, as I argue, depends to some extent on their taking part in a space that has been naturalized as a masculine space. If the environment is no longer so clearly a masculine one, then some of the imagery loses its gender-specific connotations, while the rest loses the power of naturalization. Cracks in the edifice of masculinism are appearing, not only with the arrival of feminist scholarship and a number of postpositivist fellow travelers who take gender seriously, but also in that gender issues are beginning to be addressed, however crudely, by more mainstream IR contributors.

This possibility undermines the easy assumption, made on both sides of the feminist/masculinist divide, that liberal and empirical feminist approaches are relatively nonthreatening to the status quo. Critics of liberal feminism have argued that it challenges too little to be effective in bringing about meaningful change (e.g., Brown 1989; Sylvester 1994). As if to echo this, some traditional male academics have found aspects of liberal and standpoint feminism to be acceptable supplements to mainstream theorizing. Both Keohane (1991) and Jones (1996), for example, have ranked feminisms on the basis of their "usefulness." They both dismiss poststructuralist feminism, preferring empirical (Jones) or standpoint-feminist scholarship (Keohane) that can be more easily adapted to supplement preexisting IR scholarship rather than challenge it. Clearly, they find some varieties of feminism more threatening than others, although their particular interpretations do not do justice to any of them, or to feminism as a whole (Weber 1994; Carver et al 1998).

However, just as liberal feminism, if carried to its conclusion, would of necessity involve the transcendence or transformation of liberal domestic politics (Eisenstein 1981), perhaps even relatively mild, apparently reformist, feminist contributions to IR might have radical potential. Molly Cochran argues that even highly empirical feminist IR scholarship, such as that produced by Cynthia Enloe, cannot easily be used to supplement analysis in

the "classical tradition," because, in spite of being interested in the "real," it is nonetheless epistemologically incompatible. Its central problematic is widened from traditional concerns to incorporate questions of inequality and oppression, which it is at pains to redress. As Holsti recognized, changing the central problematic in effect triggers a paradigm shift with potentially radical effects (Carver et al 1998). Steve Smith also concludes that "feminist concerns, even liberal feminist concerns, may make IR, as currently defined and practiced, untenable" (Smith 1998, 60).

Perhaps feminist contributions to IR cannot, and should not, be divided so easily into reformist and transformist varieties. Changes in the representation of women and feminism in *The Economist* in the latter half of the 1990s, and a recognition by academics such as Fukuyama that women matter to international relations, may mark the beginnings of an epistemological shift. These—albeit as yet minor—influences occurred after the introduction of feminist imagery at the margins of the newspaper and the recognition of feminist issues at the margins of IR discourse. Habitual exposure to feminist ideas, however critically or derisorily received, may of itself result in eventual changes to the accepted parameters of discourse.

In the same fashion, empirical and historical analysis of the relationship between (masculine) gender identities and international relations could also prove ultimately transformative, even where overtly reflectivist approaches are rejected. The narrow focus of part 2 of this book on the symbolic dimension of gender identity construction reflects my own particular interest in exploring the relationship between apparently abstract theoretical perspectives and the cultural and historical circumstances and political interests that sustain them (and that they sustain). It is not to downgrade the importance of institutional and embodied practices, or the construction of subordinate masculinities. The approach developed in part 1 of this book could be used to explore the gendering of specific groups of men through the practices of international relations in a way that builds on, rather than undermining or eclipsing, existing feminist insights into gender constructions, gender relations, and gender inequalities.[4] Moreover, far from providing sociologically determinist explanations, it would allow for the micropolitics of such gendering processes to be exposed. By transcending the levels-of-analysis problem and transgressing the private/public/international divides, not to mention introducing voices from outside the Anglo-American world, empirical research on this subject might severely disrupt the all-

male, largely Anglo-American space of IR, and thereby interfere with the production of hegemonic masculinities therein.

It may prove harder for mainstream male academics to dismiss such research as irrelevant, as it has a more obviously direct bearing on their own involvement in IR than does general feminist scholarship, which is (incorrectly) assumed to be about women. On the other hand, discussing masculinities is bound to awaken personal insecurities for male academics. As Craig Murphy argues, men would "have to let our masculine identity(ies) become the basis for research" (Murphy 1988, 105). Examining the construction of masculinity at the microlevel, "where all of us know something about the construction of masculinity . . . [we] would have to face very real fears . . . and those fears are exacerbated when they are placed in the context of the masculinist drive for competence and control" (Murphy 1998, 105). In this respect, the explicit study of masculinity may meet with even more resistance than feminist scholarship in general (Smith 1998).

Feminist Praxis

Finally, I would like to make one or two brief comments about the implications for feminist praxis of the arguments put forward in this book. First, beware: hegemonic masculinity comes in many guises and is extremely resilient and inventive. It has weathered many apparent crises, undergone many transformations, and survived many upheavals. However, this is a time of tremendous change that has unsettled naturalized gender constructions. History tells us that such times are propitious for feminist interventions. Contemporary struggles between groups of men over different and contradictory would-be hegemonic masculinities, some of which incorporate formerly "feminine" traits, could be exploited by feminist activists. Pointing out the contradictions within so-called masculinity highlights the multiple indeterminacies of an apparently stable gender order. Keeping such contradictions visible could help in very practical struggles. For example, women in the workplace who wish to contest the employment implications of the recoding in the business world of informality as "masculine" and of "hierarchy" as feminine need to be able to demonstrate the hypocrisy and inconsistencies of this trend. They could also strategically reclaim informality as a feminine trait in the propaganda war over gender difference.

Second, if hegemonic forms of masculinity are neither monolithic nor

consciously imposed from above by a small coterie of elite individuals, but are rather produced and reproduced in the micropolitics of everyday life in local situations, then there should be multiple openings for feminist intervention at the local level. Lots of local, small-scale feminist interventions, armed with knowledge of the gendered micropolitics of particular situations, may have a cumulative effect as powerful as larger-scale campaigns. They would certainly be a useful adjunct to such campaigns. Being aware that a number of different models of masculinity are in play could also help feminists decide when to engage in and when to pull out of strategic short-term alliances with groups of men who oppose particular forms of hegemonic masculinity. Although men who embody subordinate masculinities are more likely to be fellow travelers, politically speaking, even some hegemonic groups' political power could prove useful to certain feminist causes.

Some forms of hegemonic masculinity are likely to be more uncompromisingly masculinist than others. The masculinism of bourgeois rationalism, for example, with its formal commitment to equality, is rather more ambiguous than that of traditional patriarchy. In the past, bourgeois rationalists have at times found common cause with feminists against traditional forms of patriarchy, and the further erosion of traditional patriarchal forms of power and male privilege can only be welcomed by feminists. This is not only because traditional forms of patriarchy are in themselves odious to feminists. The narrowing of socially acceptable forms of hegemonic masculinity to bourgeois-rational and New Man varieties would reduce their overall flexibility and resilience. Stand-alone, bourgeois-rational masculinity, deprived of warrior or patriarchal trappings, would be vulnerable to feminist arguments for equality. In spite of the social contract as historically constituted being problematic for women, bourgeois-rational masculinity alone may not be able to underpin the sexual division of labor for long (MacInnes 1998).

Third, while the main thrust of this book has been to show how resilient and sophisticated hegemonic masculinity is, a counterthread, running through the discussions, has emphasized the potentially disruptive encroachment of gender issues into the previously naturalized masculine institutions of both *The Economist* and IR. Institutions that are defined as masculine, or are exclusively male, are important arenas for the production, reconstruction, and naturalization of masculinities. Masculinity appears to have no stable ingredients and therefore its power depends entirely on cer-

tain qualities constantly being associated with men. Masculine spaces are precisely the places where such associations are cemented and naturalized. Therefore, even the marginal appearance of women (particularly if they refuse to play the part of honorary men), together with feminist ideas, and/or other self-conscious references to gender issues, may sufficiently alter the overall ambience of such spaces that their masculine associations become weakened. Under such circumstances, the power of such institutions to underpin institutionalized gender differences (whether intentional or otherwise) would be diminished, even if the majority of their practices remain masculinist. The setting within which such practices take place is as important as the practices themselves, in that it is the setting that naturalizes the practices as masculine. Feminists and feminist sympathizers, therefore, should perhaps continue to try to enter masculinist environments and then keep gender somewhere on the agenda, even if only through humor. In spite of apparently limited gains, and regardless of marginalization or even derision, such actions may yet prove effective in the long run.