

**The Future of Critical Security Studies:
CSS, Ethics and Pathways for Future Research**

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Introduction

It is often taken as given that critical approaches to security have a lot more to say about ethics than traditional approaches. Notwithstanding the excellent work of people like Mike Williams (???) in pointing to the ethical commitments inherent in realist discourses of security, such commitments have been rarely acknowledged. To the extent that they are, however, as Hoffman (2009: 236-7) notes the realist emphasis on state survival would seem to imply a belief that state survival is a morally good thing. As such traditional security studies appears to remove people from the study of security (or at best sacrifice them to the prior needs of states) and generally proceeds from the problematic (and usually un-stated) assumption that a commitment to the territorial preservation of the nation-state is as good as it gets in terms of the ethics of security in international relations. If this is a caricature of traditional approaches, then in turn critical approaches to security are often caricatured as articulating a normative wish-list masquerading as theory or as simply providing a set of critiques proclaiming the ethically moribund nature of traditional approaches, advancing incomprehensible claims about discourses of identity, the politics of belonging or the gendered nature of world politics, but with little to say about 'real' security issues and dynamics.

However, while critical approaches are sometimes dismissed for turning the study of security into the study of ethics, the paper argues that critical approaches have (with a few exceptions) generally fallen short of providing us with a sophisticated, convincing account of the relationship between security and ethics. This is because they tend to work with either problematic universalised assumptions about the politics of security or with under-theorised (usually loosely liberal) assumptions about what constitutes progress regarding security understandings and practices. At stake in recognising these limitations, we suggest, is a question about the future of critical security studies.¹ Put differently, although critical security studies has established a place in the lexicon of international relations and security, to date this has remained largely focused on occupying a position of the continuing critique of traditional approaches, with its willingness to stipulate clearly defined alternative agendas so far limited. If the critical project is limited to critique this begs obvious questions about its political efficacy and ability to offer a new politics of security. Indeed, if all it does is to shout from the sidelines not only is it in danger of marginalisation, but its longer term purpose and utility may also be put under the microscope. In suggesting a future for critical security studies this paper therefore argues that more attention needs to be devoted to making its implicit normative agendas more explicit.

In this respect, the first half of the paper establishes some of the achievements of critical security studies to date, but devotes most focus to outlining some of its

¹ In terms of nomenclature we follow Krause and Williams (1997) who use the term critical security studies to refer to the general field of approaches inspired by Critical Theory and the capitalised Critical Security Studies to refer to one particular approach (sometimes referred to as the Welsh School) within it. To avoid confusion in this paper critical security studies is used to refer to the broad area while we use the label of the Welsh School to refer to Critical Security Studies.

limitations. Given the diversity of approaches within critical security studies particular attention is given to utilising the Welsh School and Copenhagen School as illustrative examples. At the same time, parodying the method of immanent critique espoused by the Welsh School of critical security studies these limitations then become the springboard for making a broader set of arguments about possible future pathways and agendas for critical security studies outlined in the rest of the paper. To be clear, the paper is not designed to assert a new unifying hegemonic discourse and project over the whole breadth of critical approaches to security. Even given what we would argue are significant normative overlaps between different critical security studies approaches important differences remain, which a particular focus on the Welsh School and Copenhagen School can help illustrate. For example, while the Welsh School has its philosophical traditions in the Marxist-inspired Frankfurt School and has a reconstructive agenda based around a generally positive view of the emancipatory potential of security, the Copenhagen School's philosophical traditions lie with theorists like Derrida and Carl Schmitt and where the emphasis is on deconstructing discourses of security to help aid our understanding of how security works (Wæver 2004: 13; Williams 2003; Aradau 2004: 391-2). Likewise, the Copenhagen School's normative thrust is one in favour of abandoning security, rather than embracing it.

The aim, therefore, is not one of constituting a new grand theory of critical approaches to security - something which would obviously be anathema to their very nature. Instead, we seek to explore a number of openings to help stimulate further debate about how and in what directions critical security studies might be taken forward. In brief, what we suggest is that this entails critical security studies being clearer about its ethical commitments, being clearer about what it understands by ethics in the first place, incorporating power more centrally into its ethical proclamations, adopting more nuanced accounts of the relationship between security, identity and otherness and reconceptualising its understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and the state.

Achievements and Limitations

Before beginning it is important to briefly clarify our understanding of critical security studies. As outlined by Krause and Williams (1997) critical security studies is a broad church encompassing a range of approaches and analyses drawing on elements of neo-Marxism, feminism, (critical) constructivism and post-structuralism. As already indicated, differences between the approaches can be notable (and will be further indicated below), but underlying critical approaches are also a number of shared premises. In the first instance, these derive from an acceptance of Robert Cox's (1981) distinction between problem-solving theories and Critical Theory. Problem-solving theories are characterised by their willingness to take the world as it is and are designed to try and correct certain imperfections within it, or to provide guidance to policy-makers of how best to cope with a reality presumed to be largely beyond transformation. Realism is a problem-solving theory that takes the condition of international anarchy (and a particular understanding of it as a realm of competition of all against all) as a given, and as such tries to derive hypotheses about state interests and best behaviour given this condition. In contrast, Cox argues Critical Theory seeks to problematise given orders. Instead of taking the world as given

Critical Theory seeks to transform it and make it better. Critical Theory therefore entails a utopian or emancipatory element to it. As such, one central focus of Coxian-inspired critical approaches is on problematising the function of knowledge as produced in problem-solving theories (Heath-Kelly 2010: 240; Reus-Smit 2009: 56). This entails asking questions such as in whose interest problem-solving theories operate.

From this Coxian base, therefore, what holds critical security studies together is a broad acceptance that theoretically derived knowledge about the world is not objective or neutral, but politicised and that as such security needs to be understood as socially constructed. Security theories are therefore best understood as constitutive of security, with the study and practice of security becoming a normative exercise. Critical security studies has therefore tended to orient around a series of questions such as: 'whose security is (or should be) prioritised', 'what are the key threats to security and how are they identified', 'where do security discourses come from', 'whose interests do they serve', 'what's the connection between security and identity'?

Although a shared terrain therefore exists regarding the contingent and politicised nature of security, where critical approaches differ is in terms of which types of subsequent questions are prioritised and the answers that are produced. As indicated above, this can range from overtly reconstructive and emancipatory approaches seeking to usurp the state as the referent object of security and refocus security on the individual, to more deconstructive and post-structural inspired approaches focused more on the politics of speaking security and cautious about advocating an emancipatory agenda of change. Taken as a whole, though, two broad themes do emerge from this brief discussion and from the work undertaken in critical security studies to date. First, security is viewed as inherently political, with this leading to a focus on what security does. Second, security is also viewed as inherently normative, with this leading to a concern with how security can be better defined and practiced. More specifically, we would suggest that answers to these questions allow for the characterisation of two trends in critical security studies. On the one hand, we can identify a pessimistic understanding of security where security is generally understood to do bad things. On the other hand, a more optimistic understanding of security is evident where it is believed that traditional views of security can be reformed. To highlight these different positions, in the following we draw particular attention to the arguments of the Copenhagen School and Welsh School of critical security studies. What we seek to highlight is how both are underpinned by certain ethical assumptions, but in problematic ways and/or with problematic implications.

Security as Political

A number of scholars from across the broad spectrum of critical security studies have been concerned with exploring the politics of security, or asking what security actually does in terms of organising socio-political space. And such scholars have shown that security does many things. Burke (2007a: 20), for example, has shown how security can be viewed "as a political technology that enables, produces and constrains individuals within larger systems of power and institutional action". In particular, he is concerned with showing how security ties individuals to the state through demands of citizenship, with this in turn entailing different possibilities and

limitations for how we think of security and relate 'our' security to that of others. The so called Paris School, meanwhile, has been concerned with practices of securitisation, of how through elite knowledge and routinised bureaucratic practices notions of security and insecurity are constituted, with this in turn shaping how individuals and groups conduct themselves in regard to particular issues and other groups/individuals (Bigo 2002; 2008; Huysmans 2006). One concern here has been with noting how in modern liberal societies the invocation of 'states of exception' have become a part of everyday political practice enabling governments to instigate exceptional measures on a regular basis and such that to the extent it is being normalised the state of exception is emerging as a 'paradigm of government' (Agamben 2005; van Munster 2007: 241). In a similar vein, developing Foucauldian themes, the biopolitics of security and risk has been taken up by various authors who have explored the implications and effects of locating the basic biological features of humans as the subject of security and the object of political strategisation (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008) or who are interested in how security discourses of risk impact on how societies conceptualise and plan for future threats by introducing uncertainty about the calculability of threats into the governing process around security (Aradau, Lobo-Guerrero and van Munster 2008). Finally, post-structuralists have demonstrated how discourses of security are frequently central to the constitution of national identities, but how in turn the constitution of identity becomes dependent upon the concomitant depiction of others in threatening terms. Only in the face of insecurity, it is argued, are states able to assert a sense of self (Campbell 1998).

Most prominent in this recent literature, though, has been the Copenhagen School with its concept of securitisation and its focus on security as a 'speech act' (Wæver 1995). For the Copenhagen School 'security' is imbued with a particular logic which they view as potentially pernicious. They have therefore been cautious about the merits of the post-Cold War expansion of the security agenda to incorporate new issues, since they argue such expansion is often blind to some of the potentially negative effects of security (Huysmans 1998: 482). This concern with security has its origins in the influence of Carl Schmitt and Realist thought on the Copenhagen School. As noted by Williams (2003) and Aradau (2004: 391-2) the Copenhagen School is largely indebted to Carl Schmitt for their understanding of the relationship between security and politics. Schmitt depicted the realm of politics as defined by the sovereign's capacity to define the 'exception' and designate 'enemies'. In this understanding security sets the bounds of politics and underpins the Copenhagen School's conceptualization of securitization as the 'suspension of normal politics'.² Meanwhile, the influence of Realist thought in Copenhagen School research is evident in their overarching view of the nature of international politics and in their conception of what speaking security does. In their view, the language of security prioritizes a statist vision of the international, presages an emphasis on conflict and the mobilization of military resources, and encourages zero-sum and us-them perceptions of cooperation and one's relations with others.

Most important for our purposes, however, are the Copenhagen School's central concepts of 'securitization' and 'desecuritization'. In their fullest statement on the concept of securitization, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998: 23-5) ultimately define

² On the application of Schmittian thought to the study of security in international relations generally, see Huysmans (2008).

it as the positioning through language (usually by a political leader) of a particular issue as an existential threat to security, which in turn (with the consent of the relevant constituency) enables emergency measures or the broader suspension of 'normal politics' in dealing with that issue. In practice the concept of securitisation has evolved in Copenhagen School thinking over time. In 1995, Wæver defined security as a 'speech act', with securitization referring to that intervention which positioned a particular issue as an existential threat. By 1998, however, the role of constituencies or audiences in 'backing up' these speech acts was emphasised (Buzan et al 1998: 26-33). 'Speech acts' did not therefore securitize, as Wæver had initially seemed to suggest, but should instead be viewed as *attempts* to securitize, or 'securitizing moves'. Indeed Thierry Balzacq (2005) suggests that this constitutes an important inconsistency in the approach. The important point to note here, however, is that security is seen as constructed through language, with issues entering the security agenda if successfully presented as threats to a relevant audience, in turn enabling emergency responses.

The conceptualization of security as the realm of emergency and even the 'site of the exception' is crucial, both in the general view of security and in making sense of the normative dimension of Copenhagen School theorizing. Centrally, we argue, this rather pessimistic view of the logic of security has encouraged proponents to advance 'desecuritization' as a normative goal.³ Desecuritization is defined as 'the shifting of issues out of the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere' (Buzan et al. 1998: 4). If security issues are ultimately defined and addressed in exclusive and militaristic terms – if security is the site of 'panic politics' (Buzan et al. 1998: 34) – then the best option is to pursue the removal of issues from the security agenda rather than hope to harness the political priority that comes with defining issues as 'security' issues. This is a point Daniel Deudney (1991) made in cautioning against including environmental issues on the security agenda, the concern being that such inclusion will result in a focus on military measures and will also result in 'us-them' frames of reference, whereas what is needed is a more cooperative and long term approach. While there is acknowledgement that some issues may be better dealt with in the realm of security than outside (particularly those that require emergency measures or the suspension of the normal rules of the political game for dealing with them), desecuritization is defined as the general preference or 'ideal' (Wæver 2000: 251). It is fundamentally understood as the refusal to use the language of security in regard to a particular issue, thus undermining the extent to which political leaders may ride roughshod over democratic processes or even use the securitization of an issue to push through alternative political agendas.⁴ Ole Wæver (2004: 10) articulates this as a 'scepticism towards security', which he sees as having 'often anti-democratic and anti-creative implications'.

The concept of securitisation has, of course, proved highly successful at penetrating academic debates about security and analyses applying the concept to a wide variety of security practices abound, although there has been a particular focus on issues of

³ We define 'desecuritization' here as a quintessentially normative position, inspired by the desire to avoid the potentially damaging implications of addressing issues in the realm of 'panic politics'. See Williams (2003); Wæver (2004). For an alternative view, see Taureck (2006).

⁴ This is something Croft (2006) has highlighted in regard to the Bush administration's use of 9/11 to push through broader elements of the neoconservative agenda.

the relative merits of the securitisation of migration/asylum (e.g., Buonfino 2004a; 2004b; Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002; Doty 2007; Huysmans 2000; 2006; Sasse 2005), the environment (Floyd 2010) and the securitising nature of discourses of the war on terror (e.g., Jackson 2005; 2007; McDonald 2005). In this respect, through its concept of securitisation the Copenhagen School has developed a framework with intuitive appeal to analysts and one that at first sight appears relatively easy to apply to empirical cases. However, securitisation has also been the subject of a range of important questions, critiques and calls for clarification. Some of these have been of a largely technical nature, related to issues such as how to demarcate relevant audiences, or how to determine when a securitising move can be regarded as having succeeded/failed. Others, however, are targeted more generally and have included asking whether the approach has applicability in non-democratic settings (Wilkinson 2007; Vuori 2008) or whether a 'speech act' approach to securitisation relies on too narrow a conception of human communication. Williams (2003), for example, has suggested the need to look at the securitising role of images.

Setting aside the full range of debates which the introduction of securitisation has provoked, for our purposes it is sufficient to highlight two key points which speak to the limitations of securitisation in adopting a broadly sceptical view of security and which in turn begin to open space for new agendas. The first problem concerns a tension within the Copenhagen School between viewing security as socially constructed (and therefore lacking any objective meaning) and subsequent claims that the logic of security is actually fixed. For an approach that is self-avowedly indebted to Derridean ideas, the Copenhagen School's view of a set logic of security presents a surprisingly ahistorical view of security. Irrespective of context (Ciuta 2009) speaking security is seen to entail the same consequences across time, with security being imbued with notions of existence, survival and immediacy. This view is odd especially given that in other contexts key figures in the Copenhagen School have been interested in uncovering the genealogies or conceptual histories of different concepts, including security (Wæver 2002). To the extent that there is a universal view across the numerous attempts to provide a genealogy of security (see for example Rothschild 1995; Haftendorn 1991; Dillon 1996) it is that security has not always meant or had the same significance for the organization of social and political worlds it does today. For example, security has not always been imbued with positive connotations.⁵ Indeed, it is far from clear that today speaking security actually even means what the Copenhagen School think it means, except in a small number of specific examples. Put differently, whereas the Copenhagen School draw a clear distinction between security and politics (and as such serve to perpetuate the assumed exceptional structure of security – Neal 2006: 33) in reality the language of security pervades political debates and only rarely has the effect of shifting issues beyond the democratic realm. Indeed, rather than shifting issues beyond politics, the language of security has often proved a rather useful way of placing previously non-politicized issues onto the political agenda (e.g. climate change). In respect of HIV/AIDS, Elbe (2006) has therefore shown how securitisation has played out in contradictory ways. On the one hand, and in conformity with Copenhagen expectations, securitising AIDS has resulted in deleterious policies that have constituted those infected with the virus as potential threats to national security to be excluded. However, he also notes that

⁵ For example, in Christian theology security has often been understood as a condition to be avoided as it was seen to imply complacency in the face of God (Dillon 1996: 125-6).

securitising AIDS has had some positive effects in that it has encouraged states to focus resources on tackling the virus in ways that would have been unlikely if it remained treated as just another public health issue. As such, security does not always work in Schmittian ways or involve ‘panic politics’ and it is not always negative and exclusionary. The Copenhagen School’s desire to fix the meaning of security therefore underplays its potential to be utilised for more normatively progressive goals. Indeed, it is precisely this focus on the ‘inevitable implications’ of securitization that has been criticized so profoundly by Welsh School proponents of security, who suggest that there is nothing inevitable about this logic and even that the whole approach is parasitic upon a Realist conception or discourse of security – meaning security is about violent conflict and existential survival (Bilgin et al. 1998: 148; Booth 2005: 271; Williams 2004: 144). Put in summary form, then, the first limitation of the Copenhagen School’s account of securitisation stems from its reliance on a universalised characterisation of security politics. In contrast, we argue security does not always work in Schmittian ways or involve panic politics; it is not always negative and exclusionary; and it is not always dichotomous with politics.

The second limitation we wish to highlight can be dealt with very quickly as it takes us into the following section and because it has so far received little development in the Copenhagen School. This concerns the limitations of the normative agenda of the Copenhagen School. Claiming a normative agenda for the Copenhagen School is potentially controversial as securitisation theory is often depicted as describing a process and logic of security, rather than as the basis for a broader political agenda (Taureck 2006). However, as indicated clear value judgements are evident in the Copenhagen School with the deleterious effects of securitisation described in terms of the exclusionary and undemocratic implications of presenting issues in the language of security. For the Copenhagen School it appears that if normative progress is to be had, then it is more likely outside of security through escaping the realm of panic politics by removing issues from the security agenda – hence, Wæver’s (1995) preference for desecuritisation. The limitation in this respect is that to date the idea of desecuritisation has received scant attention, with its implications and normative basis underspecified. Indeed, to the extent to which a normative preference can be identified it needs to be inferred in terms of the concern with the potentially negative effects of securitisation. Broadly speaking, then, desecuritisation would seem to entail a preference for dealing with issues in a realm broadly defined as a liberal democratic political one, but more specifically as one in which policies and practices regarding particular issues emerge as a result of much more open discussion and dialogue between a range of actors. As we will see below, there is some overlap here with the Welsh School’s conception of emancipation in dialogic terms,⁶ however, the Copenhagen School needs to articulate much more systematically what their vision of an ideal world order looks like and to draw out and defend their ethical commitments. To give just one example, the somewhat tritely expressed preference for ‘normal politics’ needs justification in terms of what ‘normal politics’ actually is and ‘why it is good’.⁷

⁶ On the linkage between desecuritisation and a particular definition of emancipation see Aradau (2004).

⁷ Wæver (2008) has recently attempted to expand his ideas surrounding desecuritisation. However, his focus here has been on more technical issues of desecuritisation as a strategy of conflict resolution, and within which the ethical/normative commitments remain implied rather than defended as such.

Security as Normative

As indicated, therefore, critical security studies is not just concerned with what security does politically, but also has a strong normative component concerned with how it can be better understood and practiced. A concern with ethical and normative issues is perhaps unsurprising given critical security studies' foundations in a constructivist understanding of social reality which prioritises ideational over materialist explanations. Although speaking specifically about constructivism, as Onuf notes, such approaches have little trouble recognising that "people want to think that their conduct is honourable, or good, or right" (quoted in Hoffmann 2009: 232). As such, one of the key contributions of constructivist inspired security studies has been with identifying the emergence and constitutive impact of norms (including moral norms) on security practices (e.g. Katzenstein 1996). However, while constructivists have devoted considerable attention to analysing the importance of norms in constituting good practice and right behaviour in different contexts – through the creation of a broader normative and moral context within which actors find themselves located (Hoffmann 2009: 234) – their attempts to advocate a particular moral universe themselves have been notably limited and often vaguely conceptualised, as we will indicate.

From a social constructivist standpoint the difficulties appear obvious. Given constructivism's scepticism about foundational claims to truth (a scepticism that increases the more critically oriented one is) it would appear difficult for critically-oriented scholars to adopt clear moral agendas, or at least to derive any such agendas from an ethics grounded specifically in constructivism. For example, while constructivism is open to the possibility of social change, whether particular changes are good or progressive is a more difficult issue. As Price (2008a: 192) notes, "it is hardly the case that all self-designated constructivists agree on what is ethically right in a given situation, which problematizes empirical claims of progressive change in world politics that do not provide a normative defense of what is usually implicitly applauded as morally good". Thus, while a view of the world as socially constructed opens space for a discussion about emancipation and moral progress whether this can result in clear guidance as to what emancipation and moral progress means, or what constitutes good behaviour in specific circumstances, is less obvious (Hoffmann 2009: 232).

A good example of this can be seen in the largely dismissive attitude of critical security scholars to the Human Security agenda. On the face of it, it might be assumed that critical security studies would find much to champion in the concept of human security. In particular, its assertion that people and not states need to be put at the centre of security, its critique of the negative effects of militarisation on human lives, and the way in which state security agendas frequently result in core issues of human survival being ignored, would appear to be grist to the mill of critical security studies. In contrast, though, critical security scholars have either failed to engage with the human security project or dismissed it for its conservatism. Those who dismiss it view it as a problem solving (rather than critical theory) approach to contemporary issues of human insecurity (Newman 2010: 89; Christie 2010: 170). As such advocates of human security stand accused of accepting the system as it is and engaging in unsavoury compromises with hegemonic power. As Booth puts it: "human security

has taken on the image of the velvet glove on the iron hand of hard power” (Booth 2007: 324). In this respect, it is argued human security has been coopted by Western states as an ethical guise for the continued promotion of liberal democratic forms of governance around the world. Human security has as such become part of the ideological trappings which has helped foster the linking together of security and liberal development policies by many Western states and which at its most pernicious has become a cover and support for neo-imperialist policies of military intervention in the developing world (Newman 2010: 88; Christie 2010: 171-2, 174, 176). In short, it is the compromises which Human Security advocates are prepared to make with state power and established structures of governance and their advocacy (and imposition) of a specific liberal vision of progress, security and well being, which unsettles critical security scholars (Newman 2010: 87-8).

Amongst critical security approaches the most developed normative vision is provided by the Welsh School who instead of rejecting security – as advocated by the Copenhagen School via desecuritisation – call for its redefinition. As Burke (2007b: 16) notes, since “we live in a world where security will continue to remain one of the most powerful signifiers in politics... we cannot opt out of the game of its naming and use. [Instead] It must be defined and practiced in normatively better ways”. Thus, instead of giving up on security in a publication in 1991 Booth sought to redefine it in terms of the concept and practice of emancipation.⁸ In this paper, Booth suggested that traditional approaches to security wrongly privileged the state and the preservation of state regimes at the expense of individuals. For Booth, therefore, the key question in redefining security at the end of the Cold War was not so much one of broadening the range of issues to be included on the security agenda (eg. Ullman 1983; Matthews 1989), but instead of asking ‘whose security are we talking about’? Specifically, Booth (1991: 318-22; 2005: 268) suggested that to make sense, the answer to this question could no longer automatically be the state but should ultimately be individuals, since unlike states and other political social formations humans are the only socially embedded primordial entities. The study of security therefore needed to be defined by a concern with that which renders individuals vulnerable or ‘insecure’ in their everyday lives. For Booth (1991: 319), states were at best the means rather than the ends of security (see also McSweeney 1999), while many were not only failing in their job of providing security but were actively undermining the welfare of their citizens. This pointed not only to the limitations of traditional approaches in neglecting such issues, but to the potential for states to be privileged and reified within traditional frameworks.

While drawing on insights from the academic peace studies literature (particularly Johan Galtung’s (1969) concepts of structural violence and positive peace) and trans-national and civil society articulations of ‘common security’ and ‘alternative defence’ (Bilgin et al. 1998: 135-8), the central intellectual traditions of the Welsh School were those of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and its precursor, Marx. The role of Marx’s thinking is particularly evident in the broad set of commitments to the ‘most vulnerable’; the emphasis on the structural sources of their suffering; and the obligation of the analyst to develop frameworks for changing the world rather than simply examining or explaining it (Wyn Jones 1995). In conceptualizing the role of

⁸ Although Booth (1990) first suggested a relationship between security and emancipation before this.

the analyst, the Welsh School also draws upon Antonio Gramsci and his discussion of the potential role of (organic) intellectuals in elaborating and advancing possibilities for political change. Gramsci's thought is also evident in the broader conceptualization of 'hegemony' and the imperative to destabilize taken-for-granted assumptions that orient social relations towards the interests of the powerful. Finally, and as Paul Williams (2004: 137) has pointed out, the political project to which the Welsh School is committed is also indebted to Kant and his conception of the membership of individuals in a cosmopolitan global society.

However, while these thinkers have all influenced the Welsh School approach, the approach arguably owes its greatest intellectual debt to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. The primacy attached to emancipation as a normative goal by first generation Frankfurt School thinkers such as Horkheimer and Adorno is clearly central to the Welsh School project, although engagement with the possibility for analysts to directly advance criteria for progressive (i.e. emancipatory) change is indebted chiefly to Habermas. Richard Wyn Jones (1999: 76-8) in particular suggests the need to orient around the Habermasian-inspired notion of 'concrete utopias': realizable visions for progressive change rather than abstract visions of future worlds (utopian utopias). And while a concern with emancipation was central to successive generations of the Frankfurt School, it is important to note that the ways in which emancipation was understood and related to academic theorizing changed over time: from Max Horkheimer's original focus on familiar Marxist concerns with modes of production (where emancipation was conceptualized in terms of Man's mastery over nature); to Jurgen Habermas' concern with the realm of communication (where the creation of open dialogic communicative realms is understood as central to emancipation); to Axel Honneth's conception of emancipation as recognition (where emancipation is understood as a condition in which selves receive due recognition for their identity) (see, for example, Wyn Jones, 1999).

As such, much like the concept's development and use in political philosophy, emancipation has not been understood and applied in a uniform way by those working in the Welsh School tradition. Indeed, Ken Booth's own conceptualization of emancipation has shifted since his earliest articulations of the concept. In Booth's earliest interventions, emancipation, and its role in the study of security, is defined in a relatively straight-forward manner. It is defined as 'the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do' (1991: 319). In other words, it is defined, it seems, as an end-state or condition of existence. Its status in the study of security is therefore that of a normative imperative for scholars and practitioners of security to advocate or promote; and its relationship to security is defined as simply as possible: for Booth (1991: 319), 'emancipation, theoretically, is security'.

While this understanding was reiterated in later work (e.g. Bilgin et al., 1998: 153), by 2007 and the most comprehensive restatement of Booth's position on emancipation in the study and practice of security, the definition of terms within the framework itself had shifted in subtle but not unimportant ways. Here, Booth (2007: 112) defined emancipation as:

the securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others. It

provides a threefold framework for politics: a philosophical anchorage for knowledge, a theory of progress for society, and a practice of resistance against oppression. Emancipation is the philosophy, theory, and politics of inventing humanity.

In this definition emancipation begins to shift from an end-state to its identification with a set of processes or attitudes. In this conception, Booth redefines security as something practised rather than something achieved, and where what is practised is ‘freeing people from the life-determining conditions of insecurity’. Such security practices, he argues, serve to create emancipatory spaces where, free from oppression, people are afforded the ‘opportunity to explore being human’ (Booth 2007: 115). However, despite identifying security as a practice, elsewhere in the volume elements of an end state/condition of existence remain evident. Thus, he distinguishes between mere survival (continuing to exist) and security (or ‘survival plus’ – continuing to exist, but also being free from life-determining threats while also having ‘space to make choices’ in order to pursue ‘cherished political and social ambitions’ (Booth 2007: 102)). This conception of a ‘space to make choices’ suggests a focus on the possibilities for the recovery of agency, one evident in the claim that realizing emancipation entails ‘becoming more fully human’ (Booth 2007: 115).

The increasing emphasis on emancipation as process (rather than endpoint) arguably allows for a less foundational and more procedural definition of emancipation. Andrew Linklater (2005: 120-1), for example, recognizes the traditional image associated with ‘emancipation’ – of revolutionary movements willing to use force to ‘free’ others⁹ – and instead endorses Karl-Otto Apel’s definition of emancipation as ‘advances in “nonrepressive deliberation”’. Linklater’s (2005: 116) definition of emancipation as it relates to security is therefore defined in terms of particular forms of ‘communicative action’, with ‘dialogue and deliberation’ constituting ‘the crucial link between political community and human security’. Here, the recovery of ‘voice’ for ‘the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless’ (Wyn Jones 1999: 159), is defined as the central means through which emancipation and security can be achieved.

Notably, this normative concern with developing more open and inclusive dialogue appears to share much with Copenhagen School advocates of desecuritisation. Moreover, this emphasis on emancipation as process, on the specific concern with the needs of the most vulnerable, and on exposing structural violence, also creates space to see where the Welsh School’s normative agenda departs from that of Human Security. In the first instance, emancipation for the Welsh School would appear to entail calls for radical structural change with the empowerment of the disenfranchised. To the extent to which the Human Security agenda has been co-opted by Western state power it is criticised as enabling the developed world to speak on behalf of the silenced, and of imposing a particular vision of human security and development on them from outside (Christie 2010: 181-2). In contrast, emancipation is instead about creating spaces for the marginalised to speak for themselves and define their own conditions of security. Put simply, whereas emancipation entails a different attitude towards and an equal relationship with the other, human security stands accused of

⁹ On elements of this Marxist, modernist baggage associated with ‘emancipation’ and the possibilities for escaping it in the critical security studies project, see Alker (2005) and Dalby (2007).

patronising the other while imposing a teleological view of development on the other – whether they want it or not.

However, the Welsh School's attempts to reframe security around emancipation also suffer from significant limitations, which amounts to the fact that its normative agenda lacks sufficient development. In this respect three broad limitations can be noted. First, unlike the Copenhagen School the Welsh School lacks a clear theorisation of what they believe speaking security does. Implicitly, it would appear they accept the Copenhagen School's view that security is at minimum the language of political priority and as such they wish to utilise security for emancipatory goals by tying it to more deserving referents (people rather than states). While for the Copenhagen School this is a naïve and dangerous move as it fails to take account of what they view as the inevitable implications that come from including issues on the security agenda (militarisation, statism, emergency measures, secrecy and us-them dynamics) (Aradau 2004; c.a.s.e 2006: 456), a concern dependent upon a Schmittian distinction between politics and security, for the Welsh School securitisation is rather a useful strategy of politicisation. However, the limited engagement with the nature of the mobilising effects of security claims is clear in their failure to engage with the worst case scenarios the Copenhagen School highlights and with the opposed fact that in some contexts the mobilising power of security is not always self-evident. Indeed, speaking security may not always outweigh other lexicons in terms of establishing political priority. For example, it is notable that for many people the British government's attempt to convince the public of the necessity to attack Iraq in 2003 on the basis of security considerations was thoroughly unconvincing. Where many people were swayed was when the security argument was reinforced with other humanitarian discourses linked to the suffering of others. The discourse of human rights (and Saddam's atrocities) became central for many people's support for the war, not the fear of a powerful Iraq and what that may mean for 'our' security. While the example challenges the Copenhagen School in that the power of security-speak may at once be both context and culturally specific, it also challenges the Welsh School because it problematizes their somewhat unquestioning desire to link emancipation to discourses of security, rather than to discourses of justice, for instance.

Second, the Welsh School's focus on the individual as the ultimate referent has not been without its critics. The concern in this respect is that positioning the individual as the ultimate referent object risks removing individuals from their social context and treating them in atomized terms (Neufeld in Sheehan 2005: 163; Burke 2007a: 20). According to this view, individuals are also always members of social groups and ascribe to various group identities. Indeed, such group identities enable agency as much as constrain it. The issue here can be illustrated with the stark example of disputes over whether individual rights should override cultural/group rights and norms. Western liberal revulsion at the killing of people convicted of apostasy, for example, is not shared everywhere. Indeed, Saudi Arabia abstained from signing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 because it objected to Article 18 of the Charter affirming the right of individuals to change their religion. The point, as Coker (2009: 80) notes, is that 'the Saudi decision, if only for its symbolism, can be seen as the clearest expression of a now-growing insistence that the Western idea of what is required to be a fully self-fulfilled human being is not universally shared' (also Brown 1999: 105).

The third limitation is that the ethics in the Welsh School account become increasingly banal when moving from the level of critique to an elaboration of its more practical implications or of what progress might entail in practice. Although what constitutes ‘emancipation’ is defined as context-specific, and the function of emancipation is defined in terms of ‘philosophical anchorage’, ‘a theory of progress’ and ‘a practice of resistance’ (Booth 2007: 112) formulations of security and emancipation as ‘survival-plus’ appear as empty containers. Obviously one reason for emphasizing a procedural understanding of emancipation has been to avoid accusations of objectivism and of imposing one’s own views of the ‘good life’ on others. In other words, it is not for the analyst to impose their preferences for emancipation upon individuals and societies, but rather (and following a Habermasian line) to create spaces in which the vulnerable can speak for themselves (Wyn Jones 2005). Tied to this is Wyn Jones’ (1999: 76-8: 2005) desire to distinguish between ‘concrete utopias’ and ‘utopian utopias’, with him cautioning us to set aside utopian utopias as visions of an ideal society that are unachievable almost by definition and which inevitably entail objectivised notions of what society might look like. In contrast, ‘concrete utopias’ are visions for improvement within society as it currently exists and are therefore viewed as being much more politically practical and are seen to keep faith with a processual understanding of emancipation. Although this recognises the need to be highly sensitive about how security is defined and realized there are, however, problems with this position. First, despite the emphasis on process, arguably the Welsh School has so far failed to avoid the need to smuggle in at least some conception of end states in its understanding of emancipation. Even if emancipation is defined in Linklater’s terms as a situation in which non-repressive deliberation is possible, this still implies the prior creation of a community and political system that facilitates this. And of course any vision of ‘progress’ carries with it some conception – however loose – of an ‘ideal’. Second, as Burke (2007a: 21-2) notes, the problem with the distinction between concrete and utopian utopias and trying to identify immanent possibilities for change is precisely in trying to determine what is realisable in any given context. Or as Price (2008a: 196) puts it, how can one ‘tell a political and ethical possibility from an impossibility’? Moreover, Wyn Jones’ advice is also surprisingly conservative and potentially disabling of the critical project he is undertaking. To follow Burke (2007a: 22) sometimes thinking the unthinkable might be precisely what is required.

Overall, then, the Welsh School needs to flesh out more clearly its conception of emancipation. Without doing this it is not hard to understand why so many students find it difficult to distinguish between the approach of the Welsh School and that of Human Security. Indeed, despite Booth’s critiques of human security, and despite the Welsh School’s heritage in Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and Marx, it still ends up presenting a very liberal/cosmopolitan vision, though one which, like the ‘normal politics’ championed by the Copenhagen School, lacks clear justification or explication.

Towards Future Pathways

Although the above discussion has focused on elaborating strengths and weaknesses in the Copenhagen School and Welsh School our contention is that they are reflective

of critical security studies in general. In terms of the politics of security we have argued that there is a tendency to work with universalist assumptions about what politics does, whether this is viewed positively or negatively. Meanwhile, normatively we have suggested the existence of a shared but relatively weak and certainly under-theorised liberal ethical commitment – not least towards opening space for deliberation and dialogue. Most theorists working in post-structural, Paris School and feminist traditions consistently express similar concerns outlined above about the negative and exclusionary practices associated with contemporary security politics, and endorse opening up the discursive space in which security policies undertaken on behalf of a community are developed (see, for example, c.a.s.e 2006). Some within these traditions even explicitly promote a normative concern with emancipation, even if not understood in exactly the same way as Booth (see Huysmans 2006; Aradau 2004; Lee Koo 2007; Tickner 2004). For Richard Wyn Jones (2005: 216) this is not surprising, as ‘some concept of emancipation is a *necessary* element of *any* form of analysis that attempts to problematize and criticize the status quo’ (original emphasis). None of this is to elide the important differences between these approaches, but rather to suggest the need to put these differences in broader perspective.

However, the failure to develop a really clear, sophisticated and contextual account of the politics of security, combined with a failure to articulate a clear and sophisticated conception of what constitutes progress in terms of security practices and contexts is vitally important as it leaves us short of a compelling rationale (either on analytical or normative grounds) for critical security studies other than as a means of critique. Hence the question of whether critical security studies can provide anything beyond this. Without pretending to be able to lay out a comprehensive agenda for the future of critical security studies the remainder of this paper suggests a series of pathways around which such theorisations might begin to emerge. In the spirit of immanent critique these pathways build on openings already in the literature, but suggest where more work is needed.

Critical Security Studies and its Ethical Commitments

First, it seems clear that critical security studies needs to engage more systematically with its ethical commitments, to be clearer about what it understands by ethics in the first place, and to be willing to incorporate power more centrally into its ethical proclamations. To start with the final point a shared commitment exists across much of critical security studies that suggests that emancipatory advances in the understanding, practice and provision of security are more likely to occur through the creation of spaces for non-repressive deliberation (Linklater 2005). The problem with this vision of a Habermasian-inspired discourse ethics is that it simply does not conform to the realities of world politics. The promotion of such a view is highly ironic in three respects. First, it seems to invoke precisely the kind of utopian utopia which the Welsh School at least has been keen to set aside. As Price (2008b: 10) notes, what is proposed is nothing less than the hypothetical equivalent of the Rawlsian ‘original position’ that requires participants to ignore group loyalties and identities and structures of power, privilege and subordination, to instead treat everyone as equals. Second, it seems markedly at odds with the constructivist ontology central to critical approaches to security which when in the mode of critiquing traditional approaches are concerned with demonstrating the socially embedded nature of subjectivity, identity, norms and interests. Third, adopting such

an ethic would seem to require actively excluding from the dialogue those who refuse to set aside such considerations – i.e. those ‘who fully intend to bring their power to bear on the situation to realize their interests’ (Price 2008a: 201). On the one hand, this threatens to confine the realm of the ethical to very narrow and largely inconsequential terrain. On the other hand, it entails precisely acts of exclusion that a dialogic ethic is presumably antithetical towards (Price 2008a: 202). Indeed, the desire to exclude power, culture, identity, emotion etc..., in the advocacy of processes of non-repressive deliberation might also be understood as a highly conservative move, in that it is liable to reproduce a culturally embedded status quo notion of reason/rationality. In this respect, it is almost anti-political in intent, while simultaneously appearing to hold the idealistic view that it will always be possible to reach consensus around core questions of security.¹⁰ The implication is therefore that the preference for Habermasian-inspired discourse ethics in a considerable amount of the critical security studies literature does not take us very far, and actually raises far more problems than it solves.

This need to reincorporate power within the reconstructive aspects of theorising in critical security studies supports Reus-Smit’s call for a much broader account of ethics built around the politics of answering a number of questions central to ethical reasoning. For Reus-Smit (2008: 66) ethical reasoning has become problematically ‘confined to the logical deduction of ethical principles’, whereas in practice much more is going on when ethical dilemmas (like whose security to prioritise) are on the agenda. Indeed, beyond debates about which ethical principle to invoke in different circumstances, Reus-Smit (2008: 67-70) argues that at least five other issues also need to be resolved. First, he argues, is the question of defining the moral agent in a given situation. Defining the ‘we’ is an ethical, sociological and political choice that either establishes or rejects obligations and delimits the realm of perceived responsibility to others. Defining the ‘we’ in internationalist cosmopolitan terms entails a clearly different scope of moral obligation to defining the ‘we’ in narrower national communitarian terms. Second, Reus-Smit argues the issue at hand requires ‘diagnosis’. This refers to the empirical issue of how a particular problem is defined – e.g. as genocide or a manifestation of ancient ethnic hatreds. Defining the problem entails the gathering of ‘facts’ and their presentation in a narrative socially constructing the nature of the situation confronted. Such processes of naming are far from neutral and entail clear elements of moral evaluation. Third, he argues ethical reasoning almost always entails an evaluation of the potential consequences of adopting different courses of action. However, given that what is at stake here are prognoses about counter-factual histories and scenarios questions of bias and interpretation are central to the process – as can clearly be seen in continuing debates as to whether the removal of Saddam has done more harm than good. Fourth, Reus-Smit argues that all ethical reasoning occurs within a particular context framed by particular social and historical circumstances which go a considerable way to framing what actors perceive as the ‘realm of moral possibility’. The problem, of course, is that actors are also liable to disagree on the context and therefore the limits to moral action. As he notes, such disagreements are evident between realists, who perceive the international system as characterised by continuity, and various other approaches that see scope for change (Reus-Smit 2008: 69). Finally, he argues actors also have to

¹⁰ We would like to thank Owen Parker for discussions on these points.

‘negotiate the relationship between their obligations and their capacities’. Actors who perceive a moral obligation towards an issue may also feel this is discharged because of their limited capacities to contribute to a resolution. However, capacities are also subject to social construction, being interpreted through various lenses of perceived strategic interests, self-image and social perception. As such sometimes actors may engage in processes of capacity inflation, at other times deflation.

For critical security studies the value of Reus-Smit’s framework is that it places questions of politics, power and identity firmly back at the heart of ethical reasoning, which has traditionally been the strength of the critical project. At the same time, of course, it does not on the face of it offer a clear prescription of right, progressive or emancipatory behaviour. This returns us to a point made earlier in the paper concerning whether approaches embedded in a socially constructivist ontology are in a good position to outline clear moral agendas. We would suggest that two responses to this concern can be discerned from within the literature that warrant further elaboration.

What might be termed a ‘limited ethic’ of critical security studies can be conceptualised in terms of its encouragement of a particular attitude towards security practices. Most obviously this ‘attitude’ requires a critical view questioning where power lies, whose security is enhanced and whose is undermined etc. This is precisely the current strength of critical security studies. However, we would also suggest the critical approach supports an attitude (even an ethic) of humility and optimism, which flow from its understanding of the socially constructed nature of reality. To the extent to which critical security studies embraces a constructivist view of the world it entails a belief in the possibility of (progressive) change. As Hoffmann (2009: 243) notes, the belief in the malleability of social worlds and of the lack of universal moral foundations should encourage ‘humility in our study and practice of world politics’ and should encourage us to ‘avoid naturalizing or objectifying our moral beliefs’. Beyond, humility there is also a need for optimism, or at minimum to avoid fostering a sense of debilitating cynicism. This is to say that instead of simply focusing on the undesirable effects of different social structures and security practices critical security studies should also be sensitive to the context in which those structures and practices are active. This is to say that in making judgements about the progressive nature of a particular practice, norm, structure, or institution it is important to know what one is comparing against. As Sikkink (2008: 108-9) notes, if you compare against utopian visions of an ideal society where considerations of power and instrumental actors are discounted current ‘progressive’ developments will always come up short and appear hypocritical. However, if the comparison is rather drawn against previous practices things might look different (also Price 2008a: 207-9). Central to an optimistic attitude is therefore accepting and refusing to get despondent about the fact that overcoming one moral dilemma only begets another moral context inscribed with new moral dilemmas (Price 2008a: 215).

However, bearing this attitude of humility in mind a more ‘expansive ethic’ is also evident in critical security studies in that it is clearly possible to identify a number of shared principles and values within critical security studies indicating a preference for: democracy, dialogue, cosmopolitan political community, equality and non-discrimination. Where more work needs to be done, however, is in terms of justifying such preferences, as for the most part these preferences are implicit or hidden in

critical security studies. For example, in general critical approaches to security elicit a preference for a cosmopolitan conception of moral community but it is unclear whether this is a necessary condition. Such a preference, however, needs justification since a Kantian cosmopolitan concern encouraging individuals to think like global citizens also requires invoking a sense of moral universalism that threatens to stifle other things critical security scholars often champion, like retaining space for difference. They also require a defence against (or justification for) criticisms that cosmopolitan universalism simply reproduces a Eurocentric and teleological view of history (Vaughan-Williams 2007: 108-11). Likewise, the emphasis on open dialogue needs more support. As Hoffmann (2009: 243) notes the emphasis on free dialogue seems to derive from the centrality of language and communication in a social constructivist understanding of social reality. While he argues it appears easy to infer from this that social construction should therefore 'lead to an ethical prescription for free dialogue' this rather represents the smuggling in of a liberal ethics of tolerance, and is not a necessary result of the centrality of language and communication to constructivist ontology. As he puts it, 'a commitment to open dialogue seems reasonable, but there is nothing in constructivist theory that leads us to the conclusion that open dialogue is any *better* than other kinds of dialogue. Many kinds of dialogue are possible, and constructivism cannot tell us which kinds are good' (Hoffmann 2009: 243). The commitment to free and open dialogue therefore needs to be defended in some other way.

Critical Security Studies and the Other

A second way of thinking about future pathways can be developed by considering in more depth critical security studies' commitment to non-discrimination in respect of others. Most approaches in critical security studies elucidate a concern with moral responsibility towards the other or of always keeping the other in mind. As Butler has put it, continuing to incorporate the other, even when we think their actions or beliefs have taken them outside the realm of common human understanding, is precisely 'a test of our very humanity' (quoted in Burke 2007a: 88). The challenge to IR theorising in general, here, is significant in so far as traditional security approaches in particular, but also a number of post-structuralist texts (e.g. Campbell 1998), have often viewed the existence/construction of radicalised others as central to identity formation, with the result being that the calculation of 'ours vs. their' security is precisely viewed in zero sum terms. Indeed, Rumelili (2008a) contends that this has been a more general problem for critical approaches to security, where she argues there has been a tendency to subordinate identity to security by viewing processes of identity formation as being purely derivative of security dynamics. The tendency to position self and other, identity and difference, in antagonised terms clearly presents a considerable challenge to those critical security approaches embracing an ethic of non-discrimination. It also means critical security studies needs to move beyond trite proclamations about the need to take care of the other and consider much more clearly what this might mean in practice by developing more nuanced accounts of the relationship between security, identity and otherness.

On the face of it two responses to this challenge appear evident in critical security studies and upon which future research needs to build. The first response is to question whether the relationship between identity and difference is necessarily one of dependency. Arash Abizadeh (2005), for example, has argued that unlike individual

identities collective identities need not rely on the existence of an external other, since the recognition required for an identity to be fulfilled can come from the group's members. He argues the reason this option has been largely unexplored in the literature to date is largely a reflection of the dominance of ideas of sovereignty at the international level. The problem with sovereignty, he argues, is the extent to which it requires demarcating clear borders between inside and outside (Abizadeh 2005: 49-50). In other words, the sovereign gaze, with its emphasis on exclusive territoriality, has come to problematically infuse understandings of the need of collective identities to identify a radicalised otherness beyond.¹¹ In a similar vein it might be noted that cosmopolitan visions of a universal human community would also seem to imply the possibility of identity beyond othering – except perhaps in relation to non-humans. However, as Rumelili (2008b: 260-1) notes, even if you accept the possibility that difference in international relations 'can be eradicated through the progressive expansion of communities', protestations of such a future community tend to discount the processes of othering entailed in achieving it. As she notes, 'the expansion of the subglobal "international community" to the global level necessitates the transfer of norms from certain states (or actors) to others through the differentiation – at least initially – of certain actors as "norm violators", and their –albeit temporary – exclusion'.

Meanwhile, if critical security scholars maintain that the options noted here are illusory, and that identity always depends on difference, then they need to seek other ways of theorising the relationship with the other in progressive terms. The second response therefore is to question whether the relationship between identity and otherness need be antagonistic. In this respect critical security studies has made much more headway, with various scholars noting that others need not always be presented in overtly negative terms in the constitution of identity. Thus, Hansen (2006: 38-41) has noted that others can also be constituted more positively as friends, as superior, as exotic, or even with indifference. This creates space for a more benign reading of possibilities in international relations in that difference does not have to be equated with threat. Indeed, van Munster (2007: 241, 242) suggests that rather than conceptualising emancipation in terms of universal values it might be better pursued through ensuring security is not elucidated in ways that ground identity on the basis of fear. Thus, instead of searching for a universal ideal the focus of progressive security politics might rather be on how communities relate themselves to difference.

However, although this is a positive development it arguably needs to be taken further. Stipulating that others need not be depicted in radicalised terms in constituting self-identity does not relieve the bind that almost all forms of constituting difference entail the imposition of hierarchies and normative judgements about the self in relation to others. For instance, claims about the benefits of dialogue, democracy, human rights etc 'are inevitably productive of two identity categories, a morally superior identity of democratic juxtaposed to the inferior identity of non-(or

¹¹ For an attempt to work through Abizadeh's view in respect of the Nordic states see Browning and Joenniemi (2010). To a significant degree, they argue, Nordic communality Nordic communality has been the product of an internal dialogical process in which individuals and groups throughout the Nordic countries set about recognizing each other as kin, and doing so without necessarily relying on arguments radicalizing those deemed as lying outside the community, or even focusing overly on defining the community's borders in the first place.

less) democratic' (Rumelili quoted in Price 2008a: 205). This begs the question of whether it is possible to conceive of (and justify) what might be termed 'morally progressive othering' as part of a strategy of community building through the promotion of particular values?

An initial exploration in this direction has been made by Rumelili (2008b: 263-4) who suggests various criterion might be invoked in making such a judgement. For example, in the first instance it might be argued that forms of othering that stop short of legitimising violence against the other, or that do not produce conflict with the other might be ethically defensible – although this still leaves ample room for disagreements about what constitutes violence/conflict. Another criterion of morally progressive othering might be dependent upon whether representations continue to cast the other as morally equal, 'even when practices such as denigration may allow cooperation with the other or induce positive change in the other' (Rumelili 2008b: 264). This is a view she suggests is endorsed by some post-structuralists who prioritise preserving alterity over transforming the other in line with whatever might be labelled 'progress'. A third criterion is therefore precisely that of judging othering in terms of the effects of different practices/representations on the other. Thus, despite the explicit imposition of a moral hierarchy, practices such as 'shaming' might be viewed as progressive forms of othering if they are deemed to have induced positive change in the other. Finally, she notes that different forms of identity may entail different possibilities for the relationship to be established with the other (Rumelili 2008b: 265). A distinction can be drawn, she suggests, between 'inclusive identities' (e.g. democratic), which while constituting the other in inferior terms leave room for the transformation of the other into the self – as evident in the European Union's approach to countries with an accession agreement – and 'exclusive identities' (e.g. ethnic, civilisational), which inscribe strict boundaries between self and other but which need not imply a moral hierarchy.

The problem here is that on all these dimensions there is no obvious answer as to what constitutes a progressive or emancipatory approach to otherness for critical security studies to endorse unanimously. For example, stipulating that the criterion should be preserving an ethical relationship with the other begs as many questions as it answers. If we are primarily interested in promoting normative change then we might, as Rumelili (2008b: 279) suggests, argue that communities with inclusive identities actively seeking to induce change in outsiders through processes of shaming represents a step forward. Such a move, however, stands at odds with those who claim that central to an emancipatory agenda is treating the other as a moral equivalent and allowing the marginalised to articulate their own vision of emancipation and progressive change. On those grounds we might rather prefer the creation of communities with exclusive identities that do not seek to convert the other (Rumelili 2008b: 299). Bringing in the question of how to relate to otherness therefore raises a range of uncomfortable issues, but issues that critical security studies needs to address more systematically.

Critical Security Studies, Subjectivity and the State

Finally, if we are interested in democracy, dialogue, equality and non-discrimination, ultimately this leads us back to the question of how critical security studies relates itself to what we might term the 'problem of the state', a problem characterised by the

fact that the state has traditionally been seen as janus-faced, as both a guardian and a threat to all these things. This janus-faced nature of the state is then reproduced in various articulations within critical security studies. For example, on the one hand the Copenhagen School worries that speaking security brings with it a statist purview liable to result in militarisation and exclusionary practices, yet elsewhere claims that given the primacy of the state in international relations it still remains the primary agent and focus of security (Buzan 1991). Likewise, despite his criticisms of the state as a source of insecurity for individuals, Booth is still willing to grant the state a significant role in the provision of security. Despite problems that might be associated with the state, the state is therefore not bad per se. As such we would endorse Burke's suggestion that ultimately what is required is not a blanket rejection of the state, but rather the need for new types of subjectivity in respect of it.

For Burke (2007a: 68) 'the modern political imagination' has become too limiting in terms of how we think about the ethical and ontological structure of communities such that security, violence, identity and territory have become perceived as almost inextricably interconnected and bound to the sovereign state. Thus, despite the fact that processes of globalisation and postmodernity (and the recent upsurge in international/transnational terrorism) significantly problematise this cosy equation and are putting the 'classical modern image of the secure and bounded body-politic' (Burke 2007a: 77) under stress, the state still retains a primary role as a source of self-certainty and ontological security for its citizens even at a time when the tying together of sovereignty, territory, identity and violence is clearly problematic. The issue with the state, therefore, is not that it plays a role in contributing to individuals' sense of self-certainty, but the way in which a particular type of individualisation has become linked to more totalising statist view (Burke 2007a: 80-1). The solution to this, Burke suggests, lies in questioning the ontologies and narratives that continue to uphold such a tight linkage. It is therefore precisely by destabilising the link which ties the modern imagination's conception of security, violence, identity and territory to the state that it might become possible to rearticulate relations to otherness in less dogmatic terms. This is because in such delinking space will be created for more open, overlapping and fluid conceptions of subjectivity which of necessity blur distinctions between self and otherness on a variety of plains by challenging claims to any sense of a more authentic or primordial statist identity.

Beyond suggesting that much more work needs to be done in terms of spelling out what this means in practice, there are two obvious criticisms to this position. The first is that the 'politics of disturbance' called for, through which sedimented identities and moralities are destabilised by drawing attention to the negative effects upon, and their naturalisation of, difference, may in turn become a source of considerable ontological insecurity. In other words, insisting on openness and responsibility to the other, or on the constructed nature of identity, can begin to undermine the sense of ontological certainty entailed in more exclusionary discourses and identity narratives (Burke 2007a: 93). As Connolly notes, 'The politics of disturbance can backfire...inducing that identity panic upon which the politics of fundamentalism feeds' (quoted in Burke 2007a: 93). The problem for emancipatory approaches in critical security studies is therefore that they require actors to forsake what is perceived as a well ordered, stable and reliable world in favour of one that is fluid, contingent and full of potential surprise. Hence, Connolly argues that there is a need for a balance between a politics of disturbance and a politics of governance, between continuity and change, order and

disorder (Burke 2007a: 93). How this is to be found is perhaps an empirical question, but for the critical project to be effective whether such a resolution is satisfactory is questionable. However, Burke (2007a: 94) is right in suggesting that the option between order and destabilisation is a false choice insofar as order is an illusion that can only be asserted through violence and repression, while such actions are only liable to be counter-productive, fostering further resentments and insecurities in the future.

The second problem, and by way of conclusion, is that what this discussion highlights is that there is a more general need for critical security studies to begin disaggregating between different aspects of security. What emerges in the above paragraphs is a concern with considerations of ontological security – of the need of individuals to experience a sense of self certainty – and the extent to which requirements of ontological security and physical security need not be aligned, as is clearly apparent in the politics of fear utilised by populist politicians the world over. Although a relative (and contested) newcomer in International Relations (though see Browning and Joenniemi 2010; Kinnvall 2004; Krowlikowski 2008; Mitzen 2006a; 2006b; Steele 2005) the concept of ontological security is important because it suggests that approaches in critical security studies need to go even further in spelling out which elements of security they are primarily concerned with, and perhaps more importantly, spell out precisely what they think the relation between the ontological/psychological and physical aspects of security are. As noted above, without a clear understanding of such dynamics critical security studies will lack sensitivity to the potentially counterproductive effects of the emancipatory agendas they ultimately end up advocating.

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