7

Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History

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Chapter Contents

Reader's Guide

This chapter provides a partial history of a label. It is partial both in that it is not, and cannot be, complete, and in that I am both the author of, and participant in, the history. It is therefore partial in the way all other history is partial. The label is 'Critical Security Studies'. The chapter tells a story of the origin of the label and the way it has developed and fragmented since the early 1990s. It sets out the primary claims of the major divisions that have emerged within the literatures to which the label has been applied: constructivism, critical theory, and **poststructuralism**. Ultimately, the chapter suggests that Critical Security Studies needs to foster an 'ethos of critique' in either the study or refusal of security, and that the chapter is an instance of that ethos directed at Critical Security Studies itself.

Introduction: 'Follow the sign of the gourd'

Very soon after being identified as the Messiah in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, Brian is chased by a growing crowd of would-be followers. In his haste to get away, Brian drops the gourd he has just bought and loses one of his sandals. Several of the followers remove one of their shoes and hop about on one foot, convinced this is what their newly found Messiah has told them to do. One follower picks up the shoe and shouts 'Follow the sign of the shoe.' Another picks up the gourd, shouting Follow the sign of the gourd.' Perhaps predictably, within seconds, those hopping are fighting those who are following the shoe who are fighting those who are following the gourd. Brian's 'ministry' has splintered into sects before it has even had the chance to establish itself as a ministry. The Python gang were, of course, satirizing the tendency of religious movements to fragment, as they had at the outset of the film satirized the similar tendency of political movements: 'Are you the Judean People's Front?' 'Fuck off! We're the People's Front of Judea . . . Judean People's Front . . . SPLITTERS!'

Sadly, perhaps, this all too human tendency to fragment into ever-smaller and more exclusive and exclusionary clubs affects academic movements every bit as much as it does religious and political. Any society of ideas is, in addition, a potential source and expression of **power**. It provides the intellectual resources around which to mobilize people and resources of other kinds: whether these are tithes/alms, ballots/arms, or even tenure/articles. None of this should be in any way surprising to those who work within the area covered by this chapter. While the chapter will show the divisions into which **Critical Security Studies** has rapidly fallen, one of the shared commitments of the work it will discuss is to the political potency of ideas. The social world is produced in and through the ideas that make it meaningful, which are themselves necessarily social. A consequence of this observation is that study of the social world is inextricably bound up with the world it studies; it is part of the productive set of ideas that make the world.

This chapter provides a partial history of a label. It is partial both in that it is not, and cannot be, complete, and in that I am both the author of and a participant in the history. It is therefore partial in the way all other history is partial. The label is 'Critical Security Studies'.[1] It is a label that has (one of) its origins in a conference held at York University in Canada in 1994. As a label it has been fought over rather more than it has been applied. It does not denote a coherent set of views, an 'approach' to security; rather it indicates a desire. It is a desire to move beyond the strictures of security as it was studied and practised in the Cold War, and in particular a desire to make that move in terms of some form of critique. It is a desire articulated in the first line of the first book bearing the title 'Critical Security Studies': 'This book emerged out of a desire to contribute to the development of a self-consciously critical perspective within security studies' (Williams and Krause 1997: vii).

The form of security studies against which Critical Security Studies was directed has been neatly captured by one of the proponents of the traditional approach:

> Security studies may be defined as the study of the threat, use, and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely, the ways that the use of force affects individuals, states, and societies, and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war.
>
> Walt (1991: 212)

The focus on the threat, use, and control of military force imposed a series of important strictures on the study of security in this period. Military forces are generally the preserve of states, and, what is more, there is a normative assumption that they *should* be the preserve of states, even when they are not. Indeed, our common definition of the state is that institution which has a monopoly on the legitimate means of violence. Therefore, by studying the threat, use, and control of military force, security studies privileges the position of the state. Furthermore, such an approach implies that the state is the primary object that is to be secured—that is, the state is the **referent object** of security. Finally, and most obviously, thinking of security as the threat, use, and control of military force reduces security to *military* security, and renders other forms of security as something else.

[1] When I refer to the label or to the 'field' of enquiry that is increasingly gathered under that label, I will capitalize Critical Security Studies. Otherwise, I leave the terms in the lower case.

The various scholars who followed the desire towards a critical security study were troubled by all three of these major assumptions underlying the conventional study of security. They wondered, first of all, whether our concern needed to be only on the state and its security. What of the security of people living within states? The standard assumption of security studies is that the people are secure if the state is secure, but those drawn towards Critical Security Studies wondered about those times when this was not the case: when states ignored the security of some of their people, when they actively oppressed some of their people, or when the state lacked the capacity to provide security for its people. They were therefore led to wonder whether we should be thinking about referent objects other than the state.

Questioning the referent object of security leads inexorably to questioning the exclusive focus on the threat, use, and control of military force. Large, powerful, stable states such as those in which 'security studies' tended to be practised—the United States, the United Kingdom, or Canada—may be seriously threatened only by war. On the other hand, other potential referent objects, particularly people and their collectives, can be threatened in all sorts of ways. Therefore, once you question the referent object of security, you must also question the *nature and scope* of security, and thus of security studies.

Not everyone who questioned the referent object and the nature and scope of security would be drawn to a desire for a critical security study, however. That desire was driven by a recognition of the power of ideas, and thus a discomfort with the way **traditional security** studies focused on the state. The concern was not that there were other objects to be secured in other ways, but rather that the *effect* of studying security as the threat, use, and control of military force tended *in and of itself* to support and legitimate the power of the state. While other scholars sought to broaden and deepen security studies to consider other referents and other threats, those whose desire ran to a 'self-consciously critical perspective' were centrally concerned with the politics of knowledge. Security studies as it had been practised provided intellectual and, ultimately, moral support to the most powerful institution in contemporary politics: the state. Those drawn to a critical security study sought a different security politics as well as a different security scholarship.

The remainder of the chapter traces what happened as scholars acted on this desire for a self-consciously critical security study. In doing so, it sets out the major fault lines that have emerged among those initially animated by this shared desire. The signs that have driven these fault lines are not simply Monty Python's signs of the shoe and the gourd, but rather represent disagreements about the nature of critique and thus of different forms of critical security study. Thus, while the chapter outlines the sects into which critical desire has fractured, it also sets out a range of answers to the question of what Critical Security Studies might be. My history of these splits begins in 1994.

Toronto desire: *Critical Security Studies*

In May 1994, a small conference was held at York University in Toronto entitled *Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies*. It brought together from around the world a variety of scholars, both junior and senior, with interests in security and with a concern about the direction of security studies in the early post-Cold War era. It was in the course of the discussions at and around that conference that the label 'Critical Security Studies' started to be applied to the intellectual project that drew the participants to the conference, and it was used as the title of the book, edited by Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, that the conference produced: *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (1997b).

The conference and book were an expression of the desire for self-consciously critical perspectives on security, but they both worked extremely hard to avoid articulating a single perspective in response to that desire: 'Our appending of the term *critical* to *security studies* is meant to imply more an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label . . .' (Williams and Krause 1997b: x–xi). The book therefore served to launch the label Critical Security Studies, but not to fill it with precise content (see Key Quotes 7.1 for some of the ways in which Critical Security Studies *has* come to be defined). Metaphorically, it threw open the doors of the church of critical security and tried to welcome the followers of the shoe *and* the gourd, and even those hopping around on one foot.

KEY QUOTES 7.1 Definitions: Critical Security Studies

Critical Security Studies has proven reasonably resistant to clear definition. This has been largely intentional, as the provision of a definition is limiting in a way that those behind the *Critical Security Studies* text wished to avoid. Nevertheless, there are some definitions in the literature:

'Our appending of the term *critical* to *security studies* is meant to imply more an orientation toward the discipline than a precise theoretical label, and we adopt a small-c definition of *critical*. . . . Perhaps the most straightforward way to convey our sense of how *critical* should be understood in this volume is Robert Cox's distinction between problem-solving and critical theory: the former takes "prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized . . . as the given framework for action, while the latter calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how they might be in the process of changing". Our approach to security studies . . . thus begins from an analysis of the claims that make the discipline possible—not just its claims about the world but also its underlying epistemology and ontology, which prescribe what it means to *make* sensible claims about the world.'

Williams and Krause (1997: x–xi).

'An emerging school of "critical security studies" (CSS) wants to challenge conventional security studies by applying postpositivist perspectives, such as critical theory and poststructuralism. Much of this work . . . deals with the social construction of security, but CSS mostly has the intent (known from poststructuralism as well as from constructivism in international relations) of showing that change is possible because things are socially constituted.'

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998: 34–5).

'Critical security studies deal with the social construction of security. The rhetorical nature of "threat discourses" is examined and criticized. . . . Critical security studies consider not only threats as a construction, but the objects of security as well. . . . Critical security studies . . . have an emancipatory goal.'

Eriksson (1999: 318).

'Critical security studies is a sub-field within the academic discipline of international politics concerned with the pursuit of critical knowledge about security. Critical knowledge implies understandings that attempt to stand outside prevailing structures, processes, ideologies, and orthodoxies while recognising that all conceptualisations of security derive from particular political/theoretical/historical perspectives. Critical theorising does not make a claim to objectivity but rather seeks to provide deeper understandings of oppressive attitudes and behaviour with a view to developing promising ideas by which human society might overcome structural and contingent human wrongs. Security is conceived comprehensively, embracing theories and practices relating to multiple referents, multiple types of threat, and multiple levels of analysis.'

Booth (2007: 30).

'There is no singular definition of what it means to be critical in security studies—and any rigid definition of the term critical security studies will tell you more about the position from which that definition is attempted than anything else.'

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010: 3).

In their contribution to that volume, Krause and Williams aimed to set out the scope of a critical security study, and it has served as a touchstone in the further development of Critical Security Studies. They began their case for Critical Security Studies from the concerns with the traditional conception of security I have recounted. In particular, Krause and Williams began by questioning the referent object of security: who or what is to be secured. The traditional answer to this question is that the referent object is the state: security refers to protecting the state from external threats, and the people living within the territory of the state are considered secure to the degree that the state is secure. As Krause and Williams put it, such a view largely reduces security for the individual to citizenship: 'Yet, while to be a people without a state often remains one of the most insecure conditions of modern life (witness the **Kurds** or the Palestinians), this move obscures the ways in which citizenship is also at the heart of many structures of insecurity and how security in the contemporary world may be threatened by dynamics far beyond these parameters' (Krause and Williams 1997a: 43). If the focus on state as a referent object is insufficient, what if we adjust our focus to the individual human being, or perhaps to the community in which humans live? What, indeed, if we ask about the security of humanity as a whole, beyond rather than within the states in which most of us now find ourselves? These are the questions Krause and Williams pose as the foundation of Critical Security Studies. They argue that posing such questions opens a broad and complex agenda for security studies, an agenda that is largely hidden by the traditional focus on the state and the military. Suddenly we can ask about the ways states pose threats to their own people, as well as asking about the responsibility for providing security when the state does not. This question of the responsibility of an

international community for the security of those inside a state cannot be seriously posed within traditional security studies, and yet only a few years after the Toronto conference, an International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty proclaimed a 'responsibility to protect' those subject to radical insecurity within their own states (see Background 7.1 and see also Chapter 22).

While the broadening of the security agenda was an important feature of the foundations that Krause and Williams were attempting to lay, rather more significant were the **epistemological** implications they drew from the challenges to the traditional conception of security. They argue that by looking at individuals, and particularly the communities in which they live, a critical security study has to take seriously the ideas, **norms**, and values that constitute the communities that are to be secured. Traditional security studies treats its referent object as just that: an object. The state is a 'thing' that is found, out there in the world, and subject to objective study by security analysts. By contrast, Krause and Williams argue that thinking of the varied communities in which people live requires an interpretative shift, a recognition that ideas (at least in part) constitute communities and that therefore the ideas of analysts are not entirely separable from the objects studied.

Having opened the doors of what they hoped would be a broad church, Krause and Williams set out the agenda of what would attract scholars to the service. Critical Security Studies would:

- question the referent object of security: while states were clearly important, human beings were both secured and rendered insecure in ways other than by states and military force; Critical Security Studies would engage in research that recognized this and explored its implications;
- consider security as more than just military security: once the referent object was opened up, so too were the questions of what rendered referents insecure, and how security was to be achieved, both for the state and for any other referent objects; and
- change the way security was studied, as the objectivity assumed by traditional approaches to security is untenable; indeed, once you consider the way human communities are constituted by ideas, norms, and values, it becomes clear that this applies even to the state, and so Critical Security Studies becomes a **post-positivist** form of scholarship. With the *Critical Security Studies* text, a range of scholars responded to this invitation in a variety of different ways, laying the foundations for the variation in Critical Security Studies we continue to see.

BACKGROUND 7.1 The responsibility to protect

In 1999 and 2000 the UN Secretary-General challenged the members of the UN to address the questions raised by recent incidents of genocide and ethnic cleansing: Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo. In particular, in a world of sovereign states, what could and should the international community do when those inside the state were subject to extreme abuses of their human rights? In response, funded largely by the Government of Canada, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was formed, and in 2001 the Commission released its report, *The Responsibility to Protect*.

Synopsis of *The Responsibility to Protect*

Basic Principles

A. *State sovereignty implies responsibility*, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself.

B. Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression, or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.

Elements

The responsibility to protect embraces three specific responsibilities:

A. *The responsibility to prevent:* to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk.

B. *The responsibility to react:* to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention.

C. *The responsibility to rebuild:* to provide, particularly after a military intervention, full assistance with recovery, reconstruction, and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert.

ICISS (2001: xi).

When students and scholars discuss the breadth of the initial desire of *Critical Security Studies*, they will often make almost immediate reference to Mohammed Ayoob's contribution: 'Defining Security: A Subaltern Realist Perspective' (Ayoob 1997). Ayoob focuses on the first of Krause and Williams' challenges, and questions the assumed nature of the state in traditional security studies. He argues that the state in traditional security studies is the state of the advanced, industrial north. He seeks to expand that notion of security to account for the security concerns of the majority of the world's states, concerns that 'mirror the major security concerns evinced by most Western European state makers during the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries' (Ayoob 1997: 121–2). Thus, while Ayoob questions the nature of the referent object of traditional security studies, he does not introduce alternative possibilities, nor does he enquire very far into other means of providing security, and he certainly does not contest the epistemological nature of security study.

R. B. J. Walker's contribution to the volume is exemplary of a much more radical break with the traditions of security studies understood as the threat, use, and control of military force. Walker seeks to understand the conditions that make possible certain ways of thinking and speaking about security, and in doing so explores the intimate connections between security and the history of the modern state. Ultimately, he argues that to think seriously about security in the present is to think about the reformulation of politics broadly: 'If the subject of security is the *subject* of security, it is necessary to ask, first and foremost, how the modern subject is being reconstituted and then to ask what security could possibly mean in relation to it' (Walker 1997: 78). This is a profound challenge, but one that has been taken up by a range of scholars who assemble around the label of Critical Security Studies, as we shall see later.

In between the avowed realism of Mohammed Ayoob and the radical political philosophy of R. B. J. Walker, the *Critical Security Studies* text showcased a number of responses to Krause and Williams's challenges (see Key Ideas 7.1 for one of the more intriguing), which drew on a range of theoretical traditions and explored concrete problems of contemporary security. Several chapters drew on the constructivism that was making an important mark more broadly in international relations. Others were more inclined to draw theoretical inspiration from the heterogeneous products of twentieth-century continental philosophy that are often lumped together as 'poststructuralism'. In addition, Ken Booth and Peter Vale, in considering critical security in the southern African context, began a journey that would lead ultimately to the post-Marxist Frankfurt School (see the section 'Aberystwyth exclusions').

Krause and Williams expressed the desire that led first to Toronto and then to the *Critical Security Studies* volume as seeking a 'critical perspective' on security. They worked hard to ensure that this critical perspective was not monopolized by a single theoretical approach, and so opened the conference and the volume to a range of theoretical positions. Nevertheless, the desire for a (single) perspective somehow remained as scholars responded to the challenges they laid down in creating their foundation for Critical Security Studies. Thus, despite their claims to catholicism, Krause and

KEY IDEAS 7.1 Security and Ken Booth

One of the most interesting and unusual contributions to *Critical Security Studies* is Ken Booth's chapter 'Security and Self: Reflections of a fallen realist' (Booth 1997). Booth came to Critical Security Studies as a well-established practitioner of traditional strategic studies—in his own words, a realist. That tradition trains you to keep yourself out of your research and writing, because its epistemology instructs the strict separation between the object of analysis and the analyst. Critical Security Studies emerged from a tradition that rejected that separation, and in 'Security and Self' Booth explores the consequences of that change through what he describes as 'an experiment in autosociology'. He examines the way in which the field has functioned as a discipline, to produce students and teachers of a particular type and to create a field of questions and limit the types of answer that can be given to those questions. The conclusion he reaches is 'that there is a critical relationship between the me/I as a theorist of security and what it means to study security. The argument has been that the meaning of studying security is not simply or necessarily created by the changes out there in the world, but by the changes—or lack of them—in here (who we think we are, and what we think we are doing)'.

Booth (1997: 112).

KEY POINTS

- The Critical Security Studies label emerges from a 1994 conference in Toronto, and is then used as the title for the book that conference produced.
- The initial agenda of Critical Security Studies was set by a series of challenges to the traditional conception of security: the state was not a sufficient referent object for security; thinking more broadly about referent objects required thinking more broadly about the sources of both insecurity and security; these forms of rethinking required an epistemological move beyond the empiricist, positivist traditions of security studies.
- Critical Security Studies tried to create a broad church for the critical study of security, seeing 'critical' as an orientation rather than a unique theoretical perspective.
- The desire for a critical security study initially drew scholars from a range of theoretical perspectives, including constructivism, poststructuralism, and post-Marxism.

Williams create the conditions for schism—the schism I continue to trace. In doing so, one of the key questions I consider is: 'If Critical Security Studies is not a perspective, not a position, what is it?' The first answer to this question was given by those of the so-called Copenhagen School.

Copenhagen distinctions

The year after *Critical Security Studies* had appeared, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde published *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998). This book was intended to serve as a relatively comprehensive statement of what has come to be known as 'securitization studies', or the Copenhagen School.[2] I will not discuss Copenhagen in detail, as it is treated elsewhere in this volume (see Chapter 15), but it warrants a short sideline, for it has made two important contributions to the history I am tracing.

Security: A New Framework for Analysis is built around two important conceptual developments in the study of security: Buzan's notion of sectoral analysis of security and Wæver's concept of 'securitization'(see Chapter 12). Both of these ideas have helped to inform the broad church of Critical Security Studies, but it is the notion of 'securitization' that has been the more theoretically important. 'Securitization' is perhaps the most significant conceptual development that has emerged specifically within security studies in response to the epistemological challenge Krause and Williams note. Essentially, Wæver suggests that we treat security as a **speech act**: that is, a concrete action that is performed by virtue of its being said. 'Securitization' raises a number of very interesting questions that have informed critical security study since Wæver introduced the concept.

Despite this influence on Critical Security Studies, the Copenhagen School has sought to distance itself from Critical Security Studies. In part this is a function of an incoherence inherent in the approach between the sectoral analysis of security and the concept of securitization. While securitization opens the possibility of the radical openness of social life, the sectoral approach, as it had developed before merging into the Copenhagen School, draws on a largely objectivist epistemology. In other words, the epistemological underpinnings of the concept of securitization do not cohere with those of the sectoral analysis of security. It is the epistemology of securitization, however, that does cohere with that called for by the desire to a critical security study. In *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, the authors argue that Critical Security Studies is informed by poststructuralism and constructivism, and thus is open to the possibility of social change. By contrast, they suggest that the Copenhagen approach recognizes the social construction of social life, but contends that construction in the security realm is sufficiently stable over the long run that it can be *treated as* objective. In other words, they resolve the incoherence by assuming long-term stability and so enabling a largely positivist epistemology (Buzan et al. 1998: 34–5).

The explicit separation of the Copenhagen School from Critical Security Studies did more than simply

[2] Bill McSweeny (1996) is generally credited with coining the label 'Copenhagen School' to refer to the work of Buzan, Wæver, and a series of collaborators.

announce that Copenhagen is *sui generis*. One function of the text has been to create 'Critical Security Studies' as something more concrete and less heterogeneous than the original desire. The Copenhagen authors talk of Critical Security Studies an 'an emerging school', and they shorten it to CSS. What is more, they ascribe to this emerging school two specific theoretical positions, poststructuralism and constructivism. This text, then, marks an important moment in the creation of Critical Security Studies as something other than an orientation towards the discipline, and also effects conceptual exclusions that are the subject of contestation, not least by scholars at Aberystwyth University, who have considerable institutional claim to the Critical Security Studies label.

KEY POINTS

- *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998) sets out a distinctive position on security studies, often known as 'the Copenhagen School', blending Buzan's 'security sectors' with Wæver's 'securitization'.
- There is an epistemological incoherence at the heart of the Copenhagen School between the epistemology of sectoral analysis and that of securitization.
- The Copenhagen School resolves its incoherence by arguing that the social production of security is sufficiently stable to be treated objectively.
- *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* seeks to distinguish between its approach and Critical Security Studies, and in doing so tends to produce Critical Security Studies as an emerging 'school'.

Aberystwyth exclusions

Rather ironically, the most aggressive attempt to produce a coherent approach for Critical Security Studies—to marshal all adherents to the sign of the shoe or the gourd, but not both—has been made from a position largely excluded by the Copenhagen School's characterization of Critical Security Studies as being informed by constructivism and poststructuralism. The attempt has been focused around scholars based in Aberystwyth (indeed, Steve Smith (2005) calls it the Welsh School), and has found its most complete expression to date in two volumes: *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (2005) and *Theory of World Security* (Booth 2007). Central to both of these books is the work of Ken Booth, who edited the first and wrote the second. Indeed, *Theory of World Security* is intended to be a fairly definitive statement of Booth's thirty-year research programme leading to a critical theory of security (Booth 2007: xvii–xviii).

In both these texts, Booth is explicit in arguing that not everyone who would consider themselves working within Critical Security Studies will accept his orientation to a critical security theory. In other words, he is making a clear case for a restrictive understanding of critical security theory—he is saying to us, follow the sign of the gourd, and means it. He argues, in fact, that the formulation of a singular 'critical security theory' is the second stage of Critical Security Studies work. Booth's intervention, therefore, is an unapologetic desire for fragmentation. As he says: 'There are times when definite lines have to be drawn' (Booth 2005a: 260). He distances himself sharply from the Krause and Williams of *Critical Security Studies*, rejecting the broad church in favour of a single tradition aimed at giving rise to a coherent critical theory of security.

In his first cut at elaborating a critical theory of security in 2005, Booth followed his Aberystwyth colleague Richard Wyn Jones, who had drawn on the Frankfurt School tradition to think about security theory in his 1999 book *Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory*. Both see the Frankfurt School tradition as centrally important to the development of a critical theory for security studies (see Think Point 7.1 for an example of the sort of security analysis this tradition can produce). In *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Booth throws his net slightly wider than Frankfurt in identifying the tradition, adding Gramscian, Marxist, and Critical International Relations to the Frankfurt School. In other words, Booth drew on the range of post-Marxist social theory, particularly as it has been drawn into International Relations, with pride of place to the work of the Frankfurt School in general and Jürgen Habermas in particular.

The theoretical net of Booth's critical theory of security was expanded still further with his 2007 *Theory of World Security*. Here he took an explicitly eclectic approach to theory building, engaging in what he terms *Perlenfischerie* (pearl fishing), following Hannah Arendt, picking theoretical pearls from a range of schools and perspectives. His first set of pearls is the same set he drew from the post-Marxist oyster bed

THINK POINT 7.1 The persistent puzzle of national missile defence

The approach to security which starts with Frankfurt School Critical Theory has, as yet at least, not produced a great deal of scholarship which seeks to analyse contemporary issues or practices of security. One notable recent exception is Columba Peoples' *Justifying Ballistic Missile Defence* (2010), which began life as a PhD dissertation at Aberystwyth University under the supervision of Richard Wyn Jones. Peoples' book explores the (remarkably) long debates in the United States over ballistic missile defence, asking how supporters maintained their justification of successive missile defence programmes in the face of both scientific and strategic critiques. He argues that the supporters are able to draw on a cultural 'common sense' to maintain that justification. The idea of 'common sense' as hegemonic discourse he draws from Gramsci, while he uses the Frankfurt School's ideas on technology to analyse the content of the American common sense. The result is one of the only detailed discussions of a central issue of military, or indeed other form of, security from an avowedly post-Marxist Critical Security Studies perspective.

Peoples's book is worth reading in conjunction with another volume that appeared shortly before it, Natalie Bormann's *National Missile Defence and the Politics of US Identity (2008)*. In this text, Bormann also takes up the (puzzling) persistence of ballistic missile defence in US political discourse, despite, as she puts it, a case that does not add up. Bormann provides, in the words of her subtitle, a 'post-structural crititque', drawing in particular on the work of Michel Foucault and her supervisor, David Campbell. The two texts make interesting companion pieces, tackling very similar problems while working out of the two leading theoretical traditions which have informed critical scholarship in security studies, and beyond: German post-Marxism and French post-structuralism.

in 2005, and still with the Frankfurt School the first among them. To this he adds a second, lesser, set of ideas: world order, peace studies, feminism, historical sociology, and social idealism. He calls the whole of the string of pearls that his fishing produced *emancipatory realism*.

What would such a critical security theory look like? Booth argues that there are eight themes that can be drawn from the collection of post-Marxist theory useful to a critical security theory (the eight are summarized in Key Ideas 7.2). He begins with the central claim of the Frankfurt School, that all knowledge is a social process—that is, knowledge is not simply 'there', but rather is produced socially, and thus politically, and there are 'interests of knowledge'. Knowledge benefits some and disadvantages others; it is, in the noted words of Robert Cox in International Relations, 'always for someone and for some purpose'. A critical security theory, therefore, must reveal the politics behind seeming neutral knowledge. Such a conception of knowledge implies a critique of traditional theory, including traditional security theory, which, by not recognizing its political origins and content, tends to a naturalism, assuming the ability to maintain a rigid division between the analyst and the social world she is analysing. If Critical Theory, therefore, reveals the false naturalism of traditional theory and the political content of all knowledge, it provides the basis for social change—indeed for progress. This third theme, of the possibility of progress, leads to a fourth: that the test of a social theory is its capacity for fostering **emancipation**. Change is possible, and progressive change is emancipatory.

KEY IDEAS 7.2 Themes of post-Marxist Critical Theory

- All knowledge is a social process.
- Traditional theory promotes the flaws of naturalism and reductionism.
- Critical theory offers a basis for political and social progress.
- The test of theory is emancipation.
- Human society is its own invention.
- Regressive theories have dominated politics among nations.
- The state and other institutions must be denaturalized.
- Progressive world order values should inform the means and ends of an international politics committed to enhancing world security.

Booth (2005a: 268).

The first four themes Booth derives from the broad Critical Theory tradition in social theory. To these four he adds four gathered from the specific, emergent critical tradition in International Relations. The first is that human society is its own invention. Indeed, this is a necessary condition for the operation of his earlier

themes, for only if society is a social invention can knowledge serve as the basis for social change and open the possibility of emancipation. The second theme that Booth derives from critical IR is a particular claim about contemporary world politics: that regressive theories have dominated the field. If all knowledge is *for* someone and *for* some purpose, regressive theories are the ones that are *for* those presently in power with the purpose of maintaining their dominance. Critical IR theory has shown how the mainstream theories, including security studies, serve just this purpose. If this is true, then, the final two themes Booth develops are aimed at overcoming the regressive nature of world politics. The first is that the state and other international institutions must be *denaturalized*, so as to open the possibility of change, and finally that, in effecting that change to global (security) practices, politics must be governed by emancipatory values.

These themes enable Booth to argue that a critical security theory can serve as the basis for answering three sets of crucial questions in relation to security:

- First, what is real? If we reject naturalism, which assumes that the social world can be treated as objective in the same fashion as the natural world, then we cannot assume that the social world we investigate is 'real' in the same sense as the physical. Critical Theory's focus on knowledge provides a way into understanding social **ontology**, and thus the creation of social facts.
- Second, Critical Theory of this kind provides a means of thinking about knowledge, or the epistemology of social life. It directs our attention to the interests that underlie knowledge claims, and leads us to ask whom particular forms of knowledge are for, and what function they serve in supporting the interests of those people or groups.
- Finally, it suggests asking the old Leninist question, what is to be done? Critical Theory is a theory of praxis, a step in a process of political engagement designed to transform the world. As Marx put it: the point is not to understand the world; the point is to change it.

These reflections provide the basis for a specific critical theory of security (see Key Quotes 7.2 for Booth's definition of this theory). It draws on a relatively coherent body of social theory and its application to International Relations, and aims to inform scholarship and political practice in the future. While developed largely in parallel to the critical tradition in International Relations, Booth's critical security theory is quite clearly designed to provide a specific theory of security within critical IR. What this means is that Booth and his colleagues in the Welsh School have provided a clear answer to the question posed at the end of the discussion of *Critical Security Studies*: critical security study *should* be guided by a single, specific theory, and that theory should be informed by Critical Theory, with capital letters.

KEY QUOTES 7.2 Critical security theory

In his recent work, Booth (2007) has argued for the development of a distinctive critical theory of security, and proposed the following definition of such a theory, beginning from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory:

'Critical security theory is both a theoretical commitment and a political orientation concerned with the construction of world security. As a theoretical commitment it is a framework of ideas deriving from a tradition of critical global theorising made up of two main strands: critical social theory and radical international relations theory . . . As a political orientation it is informed by the aim of enhancing world security through emancipatory politics and networks of communities at all levels, including the potential community of all communities—common humanity.'

Booth (2007: 30–1).

In order to make the case for exclusion as forcefully as possible, once he has set out the elements of a critical security theory, Booth (2005a: 269–71; 2007: 160–81) distinguishes it from other possible sources of critical security study. He explains, in other words, what is wrong with following the sign of the shoe or with taking off our shoes and hopping around on one foot. In particular he distinguishes critical security theory from four pretenders: feminism, the Copenhagen School, constructivism, and poststructuralism.

The exclusion of feminism is the most troubling to Booth's position in some ways, but in others the easiest to achieve. As most feminist writing will freely admit, there are various feminisms that draw in their turn from a wide variety of social theory traditions in developing analyses of gender. These traditions include the Critical Theory tradition from which Booth proceeds. Therefore, gender analysis can be

considered already to be within Critical Theory, and thus within a critical security theory; however, other forms of feminist theorizing are as antithetical to critical security theory as their theoretical traditions are to Critical Theory more broadly. The Copenhagen School is similarly dismissed with relative ease. The near-naturalism of the Copenhagen approach to society—so stable it can be treated as objective—leaves it 'only marginally "critical"', and in Booth's eyes (2005a: 271) suffers the same forms of incoherence I have already noted in this chapter.

There remain two challengers to the critical security theory Booth champions, the same two that the Copenhagen School identified in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. The first is constructivism, which Booth (2007: 152–3) argues is not a theory at all, but rather an orientation to world politics that serves as a basis on which to reject traditional theories. While Booth's argument may be true, it ignores the possibility, which I will explore later, that there are within that orientation various constructivist theories that do have something to say about security—just as other orientations, including Booth's, contain a number of specific theories within them. For Booth (2005a: 270) that leaves only poststructuralism, which is just too dangerous with its toxic mix of 'obscurantism, relativism, and faux radicalism'. In other words, Booth (2007: 177–8) argues, poststructuralism provides no basis for political action.

As might be imagined, and as Booth freely admits, the dismissal of constructivism and poststructuralism as elements of Critical Security Studies is not shared by all. These two theoretical positions represent, in fact, the conceptual underpinning of most of what might be drawn under the label, understood as the broad church. But even among them the sign of the shoe is defended against those hopping around on one foot.

KEY POINTS

- Ken Booth, Richard Wyn Jones, and their Welsh School colleagues argue for a specific critical security theory.
- The tradition within which they develop this theory is the post-Marxist tradition identified with Gramscian and other Marxist International Relations and, particularly, with Frankfurt School Critical Theory.
- The elaboration of the Critical Theory tradition gives rise to eight themes and a definition of critical security theory.
- Critical security theory provides the possibility of answering three key questions: what is real, what is knowledge, and what is to be done?
- Critical Security Studies should be organized around this critical security theory and should not include feminism, the Copenhagen School, constructivism, and particularly poststructuralism.

Constructing security

If we exclude the Copenhagen School and feminist writings on security,[3] and further if we watch those committed to a critical theory of security build a hard-and-fast line between themselves and the rest of what might be considered Critical Security Studies, what are we left with? Keith Krause provided an answer in a review of the research programme of Critical Security Studies in 1998, and it is the same answer to which Booth came: constructivism and poststructuralism. Indeed, as with *Critical Security Studies*, Krause's (1998) review largely elides any difference between these two positions—the church is still broad, and so you can follow the sign of the shoe or take off your shoe and hop around on one foot if you like.

In an attempt to impose some order on the studies that compose Critical Security Studies, without resorting to the definitional strictures employed by both Booth and the Copenhagen School, Krause organizes a range of literature into a broad research programme. The effect of this move is to provide a characterization of Critical Security Studies, which, while still inclusive, clearly privileges constructivism. He organizes the scholarship of Critical Security Studies under three headings: the construction of threats and responses; the construction of the objects of security;

[3] The exclusion of feminism in the production of the Critical Security Studies label is a truly fascinating issue, worthy of complete treatment on its own. As we have seen, Ken Booth effects this exclusion through arguing that feminism is a broad church in its own right and that certain feminist analyses of gender form an important element of Critical Theory. Keith Krause (1998: 324 n.4) effects a similar exclusion in his review of the scholarship of Critical Security Studies: 'I have not treated the principal themes of feminist or gender scholarship on security as a separate category. These are dealt with in detail by [others].' Lene Hansen (2000) has reflected on this same exclusion in the case of the Copenhagen School.

possibilities for transforming the **security dilemma**. Krause explicitly does not intend these headings to capture the full range of critical security scholarship, nor does he suggest that scholars will tend to treat these issues separately. Nevertheless, the effect, particularly appearing at a time in which the Critical Security Studies label was being established, and coming from one of the editors of the *Critical Security Studies* volume, was to mark the character of Critical Security Studies as concerned with 'the social construction of security' (Eriksson 1999: 318).

There are two important features of Krause's review in the story of the creation of the Critical Security Studies label. The first is that it demonstrates the impressive array of research that is being conducted and published to which this label could be attached, countering, as Krause (1998: 316) notes, 'the oft-heard charge that critical scholarship is inevitably sloppy or unsystematic'. Second, he is able to derive from the review a characterization of Critical Security Studies that is far more specific than that provided by *Critical Security Studies*, and is clearly distinct from Booth's critical security theory. Krause suggests that there are six claims that tie Critical (Security) Studies together:

1. Principal actors (states and others) are social constructs.
2. These actors are constituted through political practices.
3. The structures of world politics are neither unchanging nor determining because they too are socially constructed.
4. Knowledge of the social world is not objective, as there is no divide between the social world and knowledge of that world.
5. Natural-science methodology is not appropriate for social science, which requires an interpretative method.
6. The purpose of theory is not explanation in terms of generalizable causal claims, but contextual understanding and practical knowledge.

A pair of books by Alexandra Gheciu illustrate the approach Krause sets out and demonstrate the sort of rigorous scholarship that is possible within the research programme. In *NATO in the New Europe* (2005b) Gheciu explores the socialization of former Eastern Bloc states by NATO in the years after the end of the Cold War. Socialization is an important idea in social construction, because it is the means by which actors are constructed to become members of a particular social system or community. Gheciu provides a detailed account of the way in which NATO socialized the Czech Republic and Romania to become 'Europeans' in a sense that allied with the liberal democratic notions of what it meant to be European in the 1990s. Furthermore, she shows how this socialization was an explicit security strategy, which she terms a Kantian or 'inside' approach to security—the formation of the state as a particular kind of state and thereby productive of security (Gheciu 2005b: 7–9). In *Securing Civilization* (2008), Gheciu explores the 'inside' approach to security further, by looking at the ways in which three key European security institutions—the EU, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—respond to the post-9/11 threat of international terrorism. At the heart of these responses is the constitution of members as civilized/secure and those outside as barbaric/threatening (Gheciu 2008: 5).

The focus on the social construction of agents and structures, together with a commitment to interpretative method, contextual understanding, and practical knowledge, marks Krause's account of Critical Security Studies as largely rooted within the tradition of constructivism in International Relations, a tradition Gheciu (2005b), for example, then explicitly claims. Constructivism clearly shares homologies with both post-Marxist Critical Theory and post-structuralism, but it is not the same as either. Those following the sign of the gourd are welcome, as are those hopping around on one foot, but they may feel that they are then expected to join in following the sign of the shoe.

KEY POINTS

- Social constructivism forms an important strand within Critical Security Studies.
- Constructivism takes agents and structures as constituted in and through political practices.
- Constructivism denies the division between the social world and the analyst, and thus seeks an interpretative rather than a naturalist methodology.
- While attempting to maintain the broad church, the constructive account of Critical Security Studies privileges social constructivism.

Everyone's other: poststructuralism and security

Ken Booth's antipathy to poststructural approaches to International Relations in general and security studies in particular reflects a common, and commonly virulent, reaction. In addition to obscurantist, relativist, and faux radical, approaches labelled poststructural have been called prolix and self-indulgent (Walt 1991), and accused of having no research programme (Keohane 1988). For examples of the kind of research that is actually conducted by scholars labelled post-structural, see Think Point 7.2. The virulence of the rejection of poststructural work reflects, I would suggest, its radical promise. It shares with the rest of the work discussed in this chapter a pair of key commitments: a rejection of positivist epistemology and hence methodology, and commitment to social critique. However, unlike any of the other forms of critical scholarships I have thus far discussed, it does not stop short of the radical implications of these commitments. Indeed, a crucial commitment shared by poststructural scholarship but not by other forms of critical theory is a rejection of overarching grand narratives, and thus an acceptance that knowledge claims are always unstable and contingent. As a fairly sympathetic critic has put it: 'it is for this reason that most social constructivists and critical security studies writers are at such pains to establish the difference between their work and that of poststructuralists. Put simply, poststructuralists deny the form of foundations for knowledge claims that dominate the security studies debate. As can be imagined, this has led to much hostility toward poststructuralism . . .' (S. Smith 2005: 49)

The work that is generally labelled poststructural—and, as with the other labels we are discussing, is more commonly applied by others than by a scholar to her own work—draws on a series of intellectual traditions largely having their roots in French philosophy (as opposed to the German philosophy that animates the Welsh School, for example). While the work draws on an eclectic collection of writing, the most common points of departure are the work of Jacques Derrida

! THINK POINT 7.2 Traditional subjects in a poststructural gaze

Poststructural writing can take on subjects that on the surface appear to be the same as those found in traditional security studies. What the poststructural traditions provide, however, is often a radically different way of asking questions and providing answers. Here are two examples: the first, 'about' nuclear weapons, and the second, Canadian policy towards missile defence.

Hugh Gusterson, *Nuclear Rites* (1998)

Gusterson is a social anthropologist whose discipline privileges a particular kind of fieldwork leading to ethnographic writing. Traditionally such ethnographies are written about others' cultures, often the cultures of indigenous populations that have been (largely) untouched by European expansion. (Fortunately for the anthropologists, such cultures are often found on south Pacific islands!) Gusterson is part of a movement in anthropology turning the ethnographic gaze on his own society. In *Nuclear Rites*, he engages in an ethnographic study of the scientists at one of the US nuclear weapons laboratories. Making use of both ethnographic method and Foucault's notions of discipline, he investigates the ways in which the laboratories function to create the conditions of possibility for the building, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons. As the title suggests, some of what he finds is that the design, building, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons have evolved into a ritualized culture among the scientists that has little or nothing to do with the stories we tell ourselves about the needs of deterrence and defence.

Marshall Beier, 'Postcards from the Outskirts of Security' (2001)

In his study, Beier reflects on a study trip he took with a number of other Canadian scholars to visit the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) headquarters. NORAD is located in the middle of a mountain, usually identified as being on the outskirts of Colorado Springs. It is actually closer to the small town of 'Security' Colorado, and Beier uses this observation as the starting point for a reflection on the ways in which semiotic markers can affect group dynamics and contribute to the disciplining of dissent. He examines the ways in which opposition to missile defence was silenced within the tour, and considers the implications for the decision the Canadian government had to take on whether and how to participate in the US missile defence programme.

and Michel Foucault.[4] The rejection of grand narratives—such as those of 'progress' and 'emancipation' that inform the Welsh School—together with the varied and eclectic theoretical inspirations for poststructural work, means that there are no simple summaries or sets of bullet points that can be adduced, as with the other approaches. Ultimately, to borrow an expression, the only way in is through, and many of the texts called poststructural demand close and careful reading.[5] Therefore, rather than providing such a summary, I will consider a number of important authors and texts that are routinely cited, and thus form an important part of the story of the production of the Critical Security Studies label—even though few, if any, of these authors would slap the label on their own work.

One of the first of these works is Bradley Klein's 1994 book *Strategic Studies and World Order*. In terms of the history of Critical Security Studies, the importance of the text is that it took on one of the central problems that motivate the later development of the label: what are the political consequences of traditional security studies—that is, strategic studies. Klein considered strategic studies as a discourse constitutive of the global state and military system it purports to study. His approach to that discourse is informed by Foucault's work, which Foucault discusses as a history of the present, or a genealogy. Genealogical work seeks to reveal the historical trajectory that gave meaning to particular discourses and how they then function in the present. Famously, Foucault provided such genealogies—for example, of criminal punishment and Western sexuality. Klein turns this form of investigation on strategic studies, and in the process makes a compelling case for one of the founding assumptions of Critical Security Studies: that theories about the world constitute that world, and thus that theory, including security theory, has political effects. What Klein shows is that strategic studies is productive of the very system that makes contemporary global violence possible.

Simon Dalby's first book, *Creating the Second Cold War* (1990), similarly turns the poststructural gaze on a central problem of conventional security studies: in his case, the renewed Cold War confrontation under the Reagan administration in the United States. Dalby explores the intellectual underpinnings of US security policy, or, as he puts it in his subtitle, the discourse of politics. As a geographer, Dalby (1990) is particularly concerned with the ways in which geopolitics serves as a discourse underpinning the militarism of Reagan's international policy, and it is a concern with geopolitics as discourse which has then animated much of the rest of his work. In 1998 he teamed with Gearóid Ó Tuathail to edit *Rethinking Geopolitics*, which sought 'to radicalize conventional notions of geopolitics through a series of studies of its proliferating, yet often unacknowledged and under-theorized, operation in world politics past, present and future' (Dalby and Ó Tuathail 1998: 2). More recently Dalby turned his attention to security studies more explicitly, and explored the effects of geopolitical discourse in relation to attempts to 'securitize' the environment, and the environmental effects of this discourse when it largely ignored the environment (Dalby 2002).

Perhaps the most widely cited of the scholars working within these traditions is David Campbell, and for good reason. As Steve Smith (2005: 50) notes, 'David Campbell has written some of the best empirical work in poststructuralist security studies.' The first of these works is *Writing Security* (1998a), in which Campbell

[4] In his attack on poststructural IR, Booth suggests that most of those in IR who work from Foucault use his work on psychiatry, and then goes on to dismiss the IR work through criticisms of this early work of Foucault. To my knowledge, few working in poststructural security studies draw extensively on *Madness and Civilization*, an early work Foucault called 'archaeology', but rather on the later genealogical work, particularly *Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality*, and two incomplete elements of a larger programme on politics and war, *Society must be Defended* and 'Governmentality'. See, among others, Campbell (1998a), Gusterson (1998), Edkins (2003), Duffield (2007), Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008), and Grayson (2008).

[5] One of the concerns with much of the criticism directed at poststructural work in IR generally is that it is not always founded on such a reading of the texts it purports to criticize. As David Campbell (1998a: 210) notes: 'What is most interesting about the conventional critics of "postmodernism" is the unvarnished vehemence that adorns their attacks. Accused of "self-righteousness", lambasted as "evil", castigated for being "bad IR" and "meta-babble", and considered congenitally irrational, "postmodernists" are regarded as little better than unwelcome asylum seekers from a distant war zone. Of course, had the critics reached their conclusions via a considered reading of what is now a considerable literature in International Relations, one would repay the thought with a careful engagement of their own arguments. Sadly there is not much thought to repay.'

explores the manner in which the United States has been produced in and through discourses of danger. He asks of US Foreign Policy some of the same questions, inspired by Foucault, that Klein used to think about Strategic Studies. In the book, he shows how Foreign Policy discourse is inseparable from what he terms foreign policy (the capitalization is the key)—that is, the production of an American self and a (dangerous) other, or a (secure) domestic and a (threatening) foreign. As with Klein's work, the contribution to Critical Security Studies thinking is clear. In the case of Campbell's work, both what Critical Security Studies will call the *referent object* and the *agent* of security (the state in both instances) is shown to be produced in its own practices.

The principal objection Ken Booth (2005a: 270) raised to poststructuralism as part of a broad Critical Security Studies church was its supposed inability to inspire a politics, and in particular its inability to '"shape up" to the test of Fascism as a serious political challenge'. This is, of course, a serious criticism of any form of critical theory that sees itself in any sense part of a politics of change, as it is difficult to imagine a politics more in need of change than Fascism. It is also an argument repeatedly raised by critics of poststructural scholarship, regardless of how many times it is answered. In Campbell's case, his most extended answer came in his 1998 book *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (1998b). The Yugoslav wars of the 1990s posed exactly the sort of challenge alluded to by Booth, as it appeared to mark the return to Europe of the kind of violent Fascism to which all had said 'never again' in 1945. (For a number of responses to Bosnia, see Think Point 7.3.) In a sophisticated and compelling text, Campbell engages directly with the question Booth demands to be answered: 'What is to be done?'

! THINK POINT 7.3 Researching Bosnia

The challenge of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, particularly the war in Bosnia, attracted the attention of a number of scholars in the poststructural tradition. The ethical and political challenge of the violence is central to these works, but what also emerges is a concern with the place of Western scholarship, and the nature of the research enterprise. In order to establish his argument about the political potential of deconstruction, Campbell (1998b) first provides a deconstructive reading of the violence in Bosnia. He explores the production of identities in Bosnia that enabled the violence of the wars and their attendant 'ethnic cleansing'. Making use of Derrida's notion of 'ontopology', he explores the production of identities tied to place in such a way that the other could not be allowed even to inhabit certain spaces without undermining the self. He then turns to the responses, particularly the international responses, to the violence, and shows how various Western discourses (including security studies) created the conditions that made the genocidal violence in Bosnia possible.

While critical of some of the intellectual moves Campbell makes, Elizabeth Dauphinée takes up similar themes in her book, *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia* (2008). Dauphinée too is concerned with the place of Western discourses in the violence of Bosnia, but she does not limit herself to an impersonal account of scholarly influence. Rather, she turns the scholarly gaze on her own place as researcher, asking what it means that, in the words with which she opens the text, 'I am building my career on the loss of a man named Stojan Sokolovic (and on the loss of many millions of others who may or may not resemble him)' (Dauphinée 2008: 1). Her answer takes seriously the poststructural recognition that the observer is never, and can never be, detached from what she observes, and in doing so provides a telling account of the limits of our ethics, and our research.

Questions of research are also central to Lene Hansen in her *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (2006). The book also picks up the themes Campbell developed in both *Writing Security* (1992) and *National Deconstruction* (1998b), as Hansen develops a poststructural account of identity and foreign policy, and then uses that account to inform an analysis of Western policy in response to the Bosnian War. Where Campbell analyses Bosnia in part to answer the critics' challenge that poststructuralism provides no politics, Hansen analyses the same war in part to answer the challenge that poststructuralism does not engage in rigorous research. Hansen sets out a detailed method of analysis, drawing on, among others, Foucault and Derrida, which she then applies to Bosnia. Indeed, she concludes by comparing her analysis to Campbell's in an attempt to open an 'intra-poststructuralist debate', but holds true to her starting point by doing so not to determine who is right and wrong, but rather to explore the analytical effects of methodological choices (Hansen 2006: 217–20).

Campbell's answer (1998b: 196) to the question of politics demands to be read, and read closely, but centres around fostering the ethos of democracy: 'Democracy is not a substance, a fixed set of values, a particular kind of community, or a strict institutional form ... what makes democracy democratic, and what marks democracy as a singular political form, is a particular attitude or spirit, an ethos, that constantly has to be fostered.' This is not an answer that many find comfortable, because it provides no simple blueprint, no single strategy. Fostering the ethos of democracy does not mean that when you hold a competitive election and anoint a 'democratic' government your work is done, and so the politics that is demanded by Campbell's accounts of responsibility and democracy are profoundly more difficult and challenging than those found in most areas of security studies, even Critical Security Studies. The difficulty has led, in fact, to a concerted effort among a number of scholars working in a poststructural tradition to consider issues of ethics and responsibility in relation to 'the worst'. Much of their work draws its philosophical inspiration, in part, from the work of Emmanuel Levinas, as did Campbell in developing his arguments about a politics in response to Bosnia.

The idea of fostering an ethos is also central to the notion of critique in much of the writing labelled poststructural. Both Welsh School critical security theory and constructivist Critical Security Studies provide an answer to one of the questions I posed at the outset: what is meant by 'critical'. For the Welsh School, it involves revealing the interests behind knowledge claims, with a goal of social change. Similarly for the constructivists, it is reaching a contextual and practical understanding to know whom knowledge claims serve. Both of these are relatively static conceptions of critique: they can be done in a finite sense. Just as Campbell argues democracy is never reached, but rather is an ethos ever to be fostered, so too is critique. Poststructural writing sees its critical purposes as fostering an ethos of critique, always working to destabilize 'truths', revealing their contingency and the nature of their production. It is not a finite project, however, but rather a process in which to be constantly engaged. As with its politics, the poststructural conception of critique is difficult for many to accept, because again it is not easy. It does not allow for finite claims and finished projects, and, as students of society, we are trained to provide 'findings' and test them in a settled fashion.

Neither Bradley Klein nor David Campbell—nor indeed a number of others often also included in a poststructural security studies list, such as James Der Derian, R. B. J. Walker, Cynthia Weber, or even Michael Dillon—applies the label 'Critical Security Studies' to his work. They are surely and avowedly engaged in critical scholarship—that is the fostering of an ethos of critique—and much of their work is centrally concerned with security. Michael Dillon (1996), for example, has written an extended political philosophy of security out of the tradition of French social theory, and his more recent work explores Foucault's notions of **biopolitics** in relation to the post-9/11 security strategies of the United States and other western powers (Dillon 2006; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008; Dillon and Neal 2008). Similarly, R. B. J. Walker is one of the leaders of a large research programme on 'Liberty and Security', in relation to the contemporary practices of the war on terrorism.

While most of these scholars have not entered the broad church of Critical Security Studies, their work has inspired some within it to take off a shoe and jump around on one foot. In doing so, some have hopped right back outside again, wondering what applying the label Critical Security Studies to their work adds to the project in which they are engaged. Indeed, the ethos of critique that work of this kind aims to foster demands that we turn our critical gaze on the very scholarly practices in which we are engaged. It demands that we ask about the politics of our own labelling, including the Critical Security Studies label, one of whose stories I am telling.

KEY POINTS

- 'Poststructuralism' is a marker for a diverse set of writing inspired by a number of, generally French, philosophers including Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.
- A number of works in this tradition within International Relations are claimed by Critical Security Studies, most notably those of Bradley Klein, David Campbell, R. B. J. Walker, and Michael Dillon.
- Despite criticism to the contrary, poststructural work does provide answers to questions of political action, just not the kind of comfortable answers many are seeking.
- Central to the political and critical nature of poststructural writing is the idea of fostering an ethos of democracy and an ethos of critique. These are never finite, never reached, but something for which we must constantly strive.

...ond divisions? CASEing the joint ...returning the gift?

...approach a quarter of a century since the Tor... conference, what can we say of the state of the ...ical' Security Studies label, and the divisions into ...h it has been broken? It certainly seems well es...ished within the global security studies commu... with courses and even whole degrees offered, ...well as finding mention in most collections on the ...e of approaches to security, and even having a ...ing number of books dedicated to its introduc... (see Fierke 2007; Peoples and Vaughan-Williams ...10). There have also been moves to transcend the ...bel, the first by healing the schisms which have riven ...broad church of Krause and Williams; the second ...recommending that we jettison not only Critical Security Studies, but security itself!

In 2006, a group of scholars attempted to reconstruct the broad church of Critical Security Studies that had been central to the original Toronto desire. These scholars met first in Paris, and gathered together students of security from across Europe who shared a commitment to some form of critical scholarship about security, broadly conceived. Out of this meeting was produced an article later published in *Security Dialogue* as 'Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto', with the author given as 'The CASE Collective'. The goal of the collective was explicit in aiming to overcome precisely the sorts of divisions I have outlined in this chapter: 'the aim of working and writing as a collective, a network of scholars who do not agree on everything yet share a common perspective, is based on a desire to break with the competitive dynamic of individualist research agendas and to establish a network that not only facilitates dialogue but is also able to speak with a collective voice' (CASE Collective 2006: 444). Specifically, they sought to bridge the gaps they saw between the 'Copenhagen', 'Welsh', and 'Paris' schools (with the latter a largely poststructural position centred around Didier Bigo at *Science Po* in Paris).

The near impossibility of constructing a broad church is clearly demonstrated in the responses the CASE Collective generated. In a series of rejoinders published by the journal, Andreas Behnke, Mark Salter, and Christine Sylvester took the Collective to task for a series of exclusions they effected even in their attempts to forge an inclusive network (Behnke 2007; Salter 2007; Sylvester 2007). Behnke and Salter take the Collective to task for its 'European' focus, asking both what is meant by 'Europe' (Behnke 2007: 106), and what about the critical scholars who are clearly not European in any sense, but still involved in the critical security project (Salter 2007: 114). Behnke (2007: 108) also wonders about the exclusion of theoretical positions from this reformed church, as there seems no room for his interest in Carl Schmitt, for example. Sylvester makes a similar, and even more damning critique, in asking where the feminists are in this network—even a poststructural feminist security scholar such as Lene Hansen, who actually works in Copenhagen, but whose work is missing from this broad network (Sylvester 2007). Salter and Miguel de Larrinaga then went further to build on the critique of the narrow European focus of CASE in 'Cold CASE: A Manifesto for Canadian Critical Security Studies', which appeared as the lead article in a special issue of *Critical Studies on Security* exploring Canadian critical approaches to security (Salter and de Larrinaga 2014: 1–19).

Despite the criticisms, the goal of the CASE collective is clearly to draw at least some of the fractious followers of different signs together in a common critical security effort. A more recent intervention which might reach a similar end through a very different means was published in *Critical Studies on Security* in 2013. Anthony Burke notes that 'Comopolitanism' has a long history of thinking and practice in international politics, '[y]et it has rarely been applied to questions or practice of security' (Burke 2013: 13). From this starting point, Burke attempts to refound the ontological and ethical framework within which we can think and act security in cosmopolitan terms. Starting as it does from an ethical rather than analytical assumption, security cosmopolitanism holds out the possibility of an ecumenical joining across some, though by no means all, of the divisions I have sketched. Burke's proposed framework has proven controversial, generating significant criticism and debate. At one end, Mary Kaldor commends the attempt to move beyond 'human security' while recognizing the transnational human subject (Kaldor 2013: 42–5). Significantly less sympathetic are Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner, who see Burke's framework as a critical-sounding gloss to put on the violence of liberal interventionism (Cooper and Turner 2013: 35–41)!

The attempt to overcome divisions within critical studies of security is certainly not the project underpinning Mark Neocleous' book, despite its title: *Critique*

of Security (2008). Neocleous comes to his critique not from security studies, critical or otherwise, but from the study of the state in general and then 'police' in particular. Indeed, his question is 'What if security is little more than a semantic and semiotic black hole allowing authority to inscribe itself deeply in human experience?' (Neocleous 2008: 4). The answer is suggested by the very form of the question, and in a relentless and powerful text, Neocloeus shows how security functions as 'a political technology . . . through which the state shapes our lives and imaginations' (Neocleous 2008: 4–5). He begins by showing how security, not liberty, is at the heart of liberalism, and so, *contra* Booth, emancipation is not the flip side of security, but rather it is oppression. From there he traces this technology of government through the practices of the twentieth century, concluding with a sustained critique of the role played by the 'security Fuckers' (Kelman, quoted in Neocleous 2008: 1), the professionals who make their living from security, including the academics who lay claim to the Critical Security Studies label. His conclusion is that we must 'eschew the logic of security altogether', something that 'could never even begin to be imagined by the security intellectual' (Neocleous 2008: 185). He calls on us to go far further than any of the adherents of any of the signs I have discussed to this point, to 'return the gift' of security, and not to seek to put anything in its place (which would simply be the far easier, and common, task of 'rethinking' security). The church can be as broad as it likes, but it must still be dismantled, for as with any other institutionalized religion, it holds only oppression.

Conclusion

This chapter has been unlike many in a textbook of this kind. I have not provided clear and unproblematic answers to questions such as 'What is Critical Security Studies?', 'What is meant by "critical" and "security"?', 'How do you "do" Critical Security Studies?' Rather, I have tried to turn the ethos of critique that should animate a critical study of security on the very label I was asked to discuss. I have told a story of the short history of the label and its politics, a story that attempts to reveal how Critical Security Studies came to be what it is, and what the effects are of that coming. Questions of history and politics are the questions—though by no means the only questions—that an ethos of critique leads us to ask, and the kind of story told here is one of the ways—though, again, by no means the only way—that they can be answered.

Since the conference in 1994 with which I began this story, the issue of 'security' has taken on a greatly renewed significance. During the Cold War, the Soviet–American rivalry and the ever-present possibility of nuclear war lent an urgency to questions of security that seemed to have been lost with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Such a decline in urgency was surely to be welcomed, and led, indeed, to the possibility of an idea like Critical Security Studies taking hold. Many of the concerns that animated the conference and the book had been articulated before the end of the Cold War, but that historical context made it impossible to follow them through. Critical Security Studies was a label ripe for reception at the moment it was spoken. With the events of 9/11, security regained its urgency.

In the context of a war on terrorism, wars in Iraq and Syria against a self-styled 'Islamic State', annual updates of 'anti-terror' legislation, the reorganization of government to provide 'homeland security', and the growing recognition that supposedly civilized states are resorting to torture in the name of security, security studies has never had it better (this thought alone should give us pause, as it bolsters Neocleous' case about the close connection of security studies to such extravagant violence). What is the state of the label Critical Security Studies in this present context? It seems the broad church is edging toward institutionalization, and the dangers that entails. There are now courses taught in universities on Critical Security Studies, and departments advertise for specialists under this label. As you know from reading this chapter, textbooks include Critical Security Studies in their lists of approaches. Journals have refocused their scope, and even been created, in order to house critical security work together. Perhaps because of this, the followers of the sign of the gourd are still squabbling with those following the sign of the shoe and particularly with those holding their shoes and hopping around on one foot. The stakes in this contest over the label are now higher: jobs are at stake, as are authorships of chapters.

Nevertheless, in an age in which security is so important, and some of the practices of security so troubling to those committed to liberty and justice—to the ethos of democracy—security study demands an ethos of critique. The question that remains, and the one with which I will end, is whether such an ethos demands Critical Security Studies or, rather, the refusal of security altogether.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were to become a critical security scholar, which sign would you follow and why?
2. Why did Krause and Williams aim to create a 'broad church' of Critical Security Studies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a conception? Who does it favour, and who does it marginalize?
3. What are the various understandings of the term 'critical' that are found in the literature on Critical Security Studies? Which one do you find the most convincing?
4. Should the Critical Security Studies label apply to the Copenhagen School?
5. Do you think that the 'war on terrorism' makes the claims of Critical Security Studies more or less convincing?
6. The Welsh School suggests that Critical Security Studies should be guided by Critical Theory, which is the theory developed by the Frankfurt School. This suggestion makes intuitive sense; do you agree with it?
7. What is the difference between 'constructivism' and 'poststructuralism' in security studies? Does it make a difference?
8. Do an ethos of critique and an ethos of democracy provide sufficient guidance for a progressive politics of security in the contemporary world?
9. Should we 'return the gift' of security, and if so what would that mean?
10. How does the rendition of a 'partial history of a label' differ from other ways of presenting approaches to security studies? What difference does it make?

FURTHER READING

Constructing Security

- Krause, Keith (1998), 'Critical Theory and Security Studies: The Research Programme of "Critical Security Studies"', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 33 / 3: 298–L 333. In this article, Krause provides a useful overview of the broad church of Critical Security Studies and the literature to which the label may be applied.
- Krause, Keith and Williams, Michael C. (1997), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. This edited volume launched the label 'critical security studies' and continues to be a standard reference.

There are a number of good texts that apply explicitly constructivist theory to important contemporary questions of security: Alexandra Gheciu (2005b), *NATO in the New Europe: The Politics of Socialization after the Cold War*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (a constructivist account of NATO enlargement); Alexandra Gheciu (2008), *Securing Civilization: The EU, NATO, and the OSCE in the Post-9/11 World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (the re-configuration of European security to confront the 'threat' of terrorism); Jennifer Milliken (2001) *The Social Construction of the Korean War: Conflict and its Possibilities*, Manchester: Manchester University Press (an account of the decision making around the Korean conflict); Jutta Weldes (1999b), *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (an account of the decision making around the Cuban Missile Crisis).

The Copenhagen School

- Balzacq, Thierry (ed.) (2011), *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, London: Routledge. Balzacq is one of the leading scholars of securitization scholarship that has grown from the early Copenhagen School work, and this book provides a useful overview of both current theoretical thinking and its use as an analytic approach to contemporary security problems.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., and de Wilde, J. (1998), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. This work is the most elaborate statement of the Copenhagen School approach, and clearly distinguishes it from CSS.

The Welsh School

- Booth, Ken (2005a), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; and Booth, Ken (2007), *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. These are the most explicit statements of a Welsh School of Critical Security Studies, with Booth's own contributions arguing for a specific critical security theory, rather than the broad church.
- Wyn Jones, Richard (1999), *Security, Strategy and Critical Theory*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Wyn Jones's book is the most philosophically elaborated statement of the Welsh School approach.

For one of the few avowedly Welsh School treatments of an issue in contemporary security, see Columba Peoples (2010) *Justifying Ballistic Missile Defence: Technology, Security and Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Poststructuralism and Security

- Dalby, Simon (1990), *Creating the Second Cold War*, New York: Guilford Press; and Klein, Bradley (1994), *Strategic Studies and World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. These two books are among the first to draw on poststructural philosophy to think about the areas of conventional security studies, and in particular the politics of the study of security itself.
- Campbell, David (1998a), *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, rev. edn, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Campbell's first book is a touchstone for virtually all poststructural security studies literature. The epilogue to the second edition provides a very useful account of the distinction between poststructural IR and constructivism.
- Campbell, David (1998b), *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. In *National Deconstruction* Campbell responds to the standard criticism of poststructuralism that it cannot stand up to Fascism.

There are a number of books that use poststructural theory to consider questions of contemporary security: Simon Dalby (2002), *Environmental Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (looks at the relationship between the environment and security and shows how thinking about geopolitics has shaped this discussion); Elizabeth Dauphinée (2008), *The Ethics of Researching War: Looking for Bosnia*, Manchester: University of Manchester Press (considers the place of the academic and West more generally in violent conflict); Kyle Grayson (2008) *Chasing Dragons: Security, Identity, and Illicit Drugs in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press (explores the relationship of drugs and security in the making of Canadian identity); Benjamin Muller (2010) *Security, Risk and the Biometric State: Governing Borders and Bodies*, London: Routledge (examines the instantiation of security in 'virtual borders' through the institution of biometric technologies).

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

- **http://www.libertysecurity.org** The Liberty & Security Project is a site at the focus of a wide-ranging project looking at the intersection of security and liberty in a world characterized by a global war on terror.

- **http://www.infopeace.org/index2.cfm** The Information Technology, War and Peace Project is an online portal for a project exploring the relations among information technology, contemporary media, and global security.
- **http://www.criticalsecurity.ca** The Canadian Critical Security Studies Network is a community of scholars who identify with the Critical Security Studies label.

Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for lots of interesting additional material: www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/collins4e/