

## **Faye Donnelly: Chapter 20:**

# **Critical Security and Alternative Dialogues for Peace: Reconstructing ‘Language Barriers’ and ‘Talking Points’**

## **Introduction**

On paper it is easy to assume that critical peace studies<sup>1</sup> and critical security studies share the same lexicon. Evidently, each discipline adopts various modes of immanent critique to expose and alleviate insecurities in different environments. They are equally similar insofar as their core concepts, peace and security, are easily recognisable and commonly deployed within academic and everyday grammars. Added to all of the above, these two words can be, and often are, used interchangeably. These interweaving are particularly visible in the United Nations thematic heading<sup>2</sup> and the professed mission statements of its institutional arms.

Despite these parallels, critical peace studies and critical security studies do not always speak the same language. Instead they divide along a plethora of epistemological, methodological, ontological and pedagogical lines. This is not to suggest that these disciplines only speak past each other, but to also acknowledge that each contains internal fractures. Hence, rather than commenting on where peace should be properly situated within different critical security camps, this chapter highlights what are termed here as ‘language barriers’ and ‘talking points’ between critical peace studies and critical security studies.

Taking this approach is beneficial for several reasons. First, it contributes to the core objective of this book; to generate greater levels of interdisciplinary debate and

---

<sup>1</sup> Clearly there are multiple ways to theorise peace studies. However, within the remit of this chapter this term is used to denote the peace studies conceptualised in this book

<sup>2</sup> Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/peace/>> (accessed 24 March 2014).

collaborations. Second, setting out to build bridges between critical peace studies and critical security studies offers a counterweight to the reified straw man tendencies circulating in current debates. While the terminology of language barriers can easily be read as the continuation of “polemical recriminations”<sup>3</sup>, in this chapter it is explicitly deployed to reflect on how disagreements can be overcome. As Barry Buzan previously noted,

*“up to a point, opposition between basic concepts is fruitful. Each serves to stimulate the other by providing a contrast, and criticism creates incentives to sharpen and deepen thinking. Beyond that point, however, this process declines into diminishing, and eventually negative, returns. Opposition becomes institutionalised and politicised, and creative thinking is either overridden by the rituals of intellectual entrenchment, or stifled by the lack of creative room within the tight contradictory confines”*.<sup>4</sup>

Paying heed to Buzan’s remarks, this chapter does not conceptualise ‘language barriers’ and ‘talking points’ as exclusive categories but as dialectical modes of dialogue. For as we shall see talking points can often create language barriers, and vice versa. Yet, paradoxically, the very medium that has been used to create and institutionalise language barriers between critical peace studies and critical security studies also provides the tools with which to break them down. Indeed talking through their biggest disagreements could generate “thinking space”<sup>5</sup> and ways to listen to “voices previously unheard”.<sup>6</sup> Although this is a challenging

---

<sup>3</sup> K. Krause and M.C. Williams (1997) ‘Preface: Toward Critical Security Studies’ in K. Krause and M.C. Williams (ed.) *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): vii-xxiii.

<sup>4</sup> B. Buzan (1984) ‘Peace, Power, and Security: Contending Concepts in the Study of International Relations’, *Journal of Peace Research* 21(2): 109-125.

<sup>5</sup> For further discussion see J. George (1989) ‘International Relations and the Search for Thinking Space: Another View of the Third Debate’, *International Studies Quarterly* 33: 269-279.; J. George and D. Campbell (1990) ‘Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations’, *International Studies Quarterly* 34(3): 269-293; P.T Jackson (2001) ‘Constructing Thinking Space: Alexander Wendt and The Virtues of Engagement’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 36(1): 109-120; P. T. Jackson (2011) *The Conduct of International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (London and New York: Routledge).

<sup>6</sup> J. George ‘International Relations and the Search for Thinking Space’, 269.

position to return to, it is suggested here that it could instigate alternative dialogues about peace and security.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds in four stages. The opening section briefly examines the concept of peace from a critical security studies perspective by framing it as an essentially contested concept (ECC).<sup>7</sup> Within critical security studies this idea is already widely employed.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, very few, if any, explicit attempts have been made to coin peace as an ECC, despite voluminous literatures agreeing that this concept has many conflicting meanings.<sup>9</sup> The next section outlines three ‘language barriers’ between critical peace studies and critical security studies, which are labelled as 1) academic ‘others’ and the storylines of research; 2) speech acts and securitisation and 3) subaltern and forgotten speakers. Building on these foci the third section raises three potential ‘talking points’, namely 1) the everyday and the local; 2) desecuritisation and human security and 3) ‘the unknown’. Again the goal behind these talking points is to begin conversations rather than produce any finite agreement. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how critical security studies can help to reframe how we think and talk about peace, security and world politics.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> W. B. Gallie (1955-1956) ‘Essentially Contested Concepts’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56: 167-198.

<sup>8</sup> Among others see B. Buzan (1991) *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Harvester Wheatsheaf); W. E. Connolly (1983) *The Terms of Political Discourse* (Oxford: Robertson); S. Dalby ‘Contesting an Essential Concept: Reading the Dilemmas of Contemporary Security Discourse’ In Krause and Williams, *Critical Security Studies*, p. 3-32; K. Fierke (2007) *Critical Approaches to International Security* (Cambridge Polity).

<sup>9</sup> On the idea of peace as an ECC see S. Guzzini and D. Jung (2004) ‘Copenhagen Peace Research’ in S. Guzzini and D. Jung (ed) *Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research* (Routledge); R. Mac Ginty (2006) *No War, No Peace: The Rejuvenation of Stalled Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) and O. P. Richmond (2009) ‘A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirenism and the Everyday’, *The Review of International Studies* 35(3): 557-580.

<sup>10</sup> See H. Patomäki (1996) ‘How to Tell Better Stories about World Politics’, *European Journal of International Relations* 2(1): 105-133.

## Framing Peace as an ECC: A Critical Security Perspective

Today scholars from Aberystwyth, to Copenhagen, to Paris<sup>11</sup> and beyond, have gathered under the umbrella of critical security studies.<sup>12</sup> Indeed it is hard to envision a level of analysis or referent object that remains impervious to this metanarrative. The exponential growth of critical security studies complicates attempts to pinpoint a singular organising principle. Nor is it advisable given the heavy emphasis that this heterogeneous vein of scholarship places on studying how security is socially constructed, reconstructed and deconstructed.

Although scholars working under the aegis of critical security studies adopt vast arrays of theoretical standpoints and research agendas, they are connected by two interlinked themes. First, it is undoubtedly the case that critical security scholars, in all their forms and permutations, argue that the meaning of security cannot be scientifically hypothesised, measured, tested or verified. Conversely, they argue that security is an ECC on the understanding that, “the nature of security defies pursuit of an agreed definition”.<sup>13</sup> As reflected in this statement, critical security scholars also contend that no single model or typology of security exists. Thus, instead of drawing disciplining boundaries, they argue that “security is unbound”.<sup>14</sup> Apart from decrying ‘traditional’<sup>15</sup> dogmas, these scholars also set

---

<sup>11</sup> O. Wæver used this phrasing in his 2004 paper ‘Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New “Schools” in Security Theory and Their Origins between Core and Periphery’, paper presented at 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Montreal, Canada, 17-20 March. Also see the C.A.S.E Collective (2006) ‘Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto’, *Security Dialogue* 37(4): 443-487; C. Peoples and N. Vaughan Williams (2010) ‘*Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*’ (London and New York: Routledge).

<sup>12</sup> For extensive overviews of the evolving fields of critical security studies see C. Aradau, J. Huysmans, A. Neal and N. Voelkner (2014) ‘*Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis (New International Relations)*’ (Routledge); B. Buzan and L. Hansen (2009) ‘*The Evolution of International Security Studies*’ (Cambridge University Press); C. Peoples and N. Vaughan Williams (2010) ‘*Critical Security Studies*’; K. Fierke (2007) ‘*Critical Approaches to International Security*’ (Cambridge: Polity); K. Krause and M.C. Williams, ‘*Critical Security Studies*’; M. Salter and C.E. Mutlu (2013) ‘*Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*’ (London and New York: Routledge).

<sup>13</sup> Buzan, ‘People, States and Fear’, p.16

<sup>14</sup> J. Huysmans (2014) ‘*Security Unbound: Enacting Democratic Limits*’ (London and New York: Routledge).

out to create a reflexive field. For many this has meant shifting away from merely ‘explaining’ why security is constructed in different ways in different contexts to ‘understanding’<sup>16</sup> how such actions become possible.<sup>17</sup> A crucial dimension behind this shift is to promote modes of analysis that can account for unintended consequences and transformative processes. Such aspirations are interlaced with critical security studies endeavours to permanently unsettle the status quo and thus foreground the contested nature of security.

For the purposes of this chapter it is pertinent to conceptualise peace as an ECC for several reasons. First, it allows us to ask how peace becomes possible. Moreover, it ensures that when we ask this question we can gain multiple answers rather than an answer to it. For, if viewed as an essentially contested concept, peace will continue to have multiple meanings and purposes depending on how it is used in theory and in practice. Another added value of conceptualising peace through the lens of an ECC is that it alters, “who is telling the story and how the story is told”.<sup>18</sup> Since everything is open to perpetual contestation, it holds that key interlocutors can be challenged, replaced and transformed. Lastly, drawing on the concept of an ECC allows us to gain glimpses into how language barriers and talking points between the two disciplines have been socially constructed and pathways through which they might be overcome. It is to these issues we now turn.

---

<sup>15</sup> The term traditional is typically used in critical security studies to denote realist, rationalist and positivist theories and their focus on militaristic, statist and structurally determined actions.

<sup>16</sup> On the distinction between explanation and understanding see M. Hollis and S. Smith (1991) ‘Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations’, *Review of International Studies* 17(4): 393-410; (1990) ‘*Explaining and Understanding International Relations*’ (Oxford: Clarendon Press); (1994) ‘Two Stories about Structure and Agency’, *Review of International Studies* 20(3): 241-251.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of the importance of ‘how possible questions’ see R. Doty (1993) ‘Foreign Policy as a Social Construction’, *International Studies Quarterly* 37(3): 297-320; M. McDonald and M. Merefield (2010) ‘How was Howard’s War Possible? Winning the War of Position Over Iraq’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64(2): 186-204.

<sup>18</sup> R. Kapur (2006) ‘Human Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Take a Walk on the Dark Side’, *Sydney Law Review* 28: 685.

## Language Barriers

### 1) *Academic ‘Others’ and the Storylines of Research*

Identifying language barriers and academic ‘others’ in international relations and/or between critical peace studies and critical security studies is not difficult.<sup>19</sup> The remarkable ease with which such points of encounters are taken for granted is evident in the axiomatic ways that scholars employ them, either to speak to each other or about their subject matters.<sup>20</sup> Anyone paying attention will be aware that this chapter is guilty of reproducing a pejorative ‘other’ by introducing critical security studies vis-à-vis ‘traditional’ ones. While the latter label is frequently invoked to delineate how we ought to study security, it is also problematic. First, this encompassing term lumps vastly different theories and theorists together into a singularity. In the process ‘traditional’ approaches are readily dismissed and easily replaced by two “childhood diseases”.<sup>21</sup> The first is,

*“that of always reinventing the wheel, and the other, concomitant with the first, is that of not reading what other people have written, either in the name of (sometimes proud) insularity, or else because one does not even suspect that what they might have written might constitute any contribution to the field”.*<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See K. M. Fierke (2003) ‘Breaking the Silence: Language and Method in International Relations’ in F. Debrix (ed) *Language, Agency and Politics in a Constructed World* (Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe) and K. M. Fierke and M. Nicholson (2001) ‘Divided by a Common Language: Formal and Constructivist Approaches to Games’, *Global Society* 15(1): 7-25; J.A. Tickner (1997) ‘You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists’, *International Studies Quarterly* 41(4): 611-632.

<sup>20</sup> Notable deviations to this trend are ‘realist constructivist’ and ‘constructivist realist’ approaches. See J.S. Barkin (2003) ‘Realist Constructivism’, *International Studies Review* 5(3): 325-342; P.T Jackson and D.H. Nexon (2004) ‘Constructivist Realism or Realist-Constructivism?’, *International Studies Review* 6(2): 337-341.

<sup>21</sup> A. Lefevere (1993) ‘Discourses on Translation: Recent, Less Recent and to Come’, *Target* 5(2): 299-241.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.299-230

Tough competition for limited funding in limited research bodies, and the unrelenting pressure for academics to publish in high impact peer-reviewed journals, aggravate rather than alleviate these symptoms.

Two clarifications are necessary here. The argument being made is emphatically not that ‘traditional’ approaches to security studies are perfect. Suggestions of this kind are dubious for any theory or analytical framework. Nor is it being suggested that critical security studies have not improved our debates. They have. What remains irrespective of these clarifications is that the uncritical use of ‘traditional’ and ‘critical’ frames has encouraged the closure of several lines of intra and interdisciplinary dialogues between critical peace studies and critical security studies.<sup>23</sup> A more honest, if arguably more sceptical, reflection here is that peace is currently being written out of critical security studies.<sup>24</sup> Trawling through various textbooks and edited volumes produced in the latter field exemplifies that scant attention is being devoted to peace.<sup>25</sup> Equally troubling is the lack of questioning over whether such portrayals and omissions constitute “cracked-glass lenses”.<sup>26</sup> All in all, these trends are allowing careful contextualisation to be lost.

Let us take a prominent example, the Copenhagen School. Although this group of scholars are best known as the pioneers of critical security and securitisation studies, they started out as part of the Copenhagen Peace and Research Institute (COPRI) founded in 1985.<sup>27</sup> Today these roots of origin are not hidden in the storylines of critical peace and critical security

---

<sup>23</sup> The term ‘gate-keeping’ is also relevant here. See G. Sanghera and S Thapar-Bjorkert (2008) ‘Methodological Dilemmas: Gatekeepers and Positionality in Bradford’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(3):543-562.

<sup>24</sup> For further discussion on the power of writing histories and security see D. Campbell (1998) ‘*Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*’ (Manchester: Manchester University Press); R. L. Doty (1996) ‘*Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*’ (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

<sup>25</sup> Two exceptions to this trend are B. Buzan and L. Hansen ‘The Evolution of International Security Studies’ and the C.A.S.E Collective.

<sup>26</sup> K. Booth (2008) ‘The Human Faces of Terror: Reflections in a Cracked Looking Glass’, *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1(1): 65-79.

<sup>27</sup> For further discussions S. Guzzini and D. Jung, ‘*Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research*’

research. Nonetheless, they are routinely glossed over as backdrops to show the emergence and evolution of each respective field. On the surface this pattern does not appear to be problematic. Starting with the early work of COPRI, however, paints a much clearer awareness of the interdependent, albeit contested, interfaces between peace and security. As we shall see momentarily, these initial expositions can be viewed as part and parcel of how critical peace studies and critical security scholars have become framed as academic ‘others’. Yet digging deeper into the storylines of research COPRI instigated serves to simultaneously expose how fraught with contradictions and complications these ‘others’ are. Irrespective of which narration is privileged as critical peace studies and critical studies continue to proliferate, it is always worth remembering that peace and security overlap and interact in multifarious rather than purely antagonistic ways.

## 2) *Speech Acts and Securitisation*

Whilst the nexus between (de)securitisation and peace has recently been hinted at<sup>28</sup>, the two fields exist almost entirely in isolation from each other. A major language barrier here is that critical peace studies and critical security studies are uttering and studying different speech acts. Following the Copenhagen School, the primary research foci is to explore how agents are speaking security to identify and construct existential threats that legitimate the use of extraordinary measures.<sup>29</sup> In tandem, explorations into who is speaking peace fall way, at least from this perspective. Evidently within contours of the Copenhagen School’s framework

---

<sup>28</sup> For some connection points see C. Burger and T. Villumsen (2007) ‘Beyond the Gap: Relevance, Fields of Practice and the Securitizing Consequences of (Democratic Peace) Research’, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 10(4): 417–448; J. Hayes (2009) ‘Identity and Securitisation in the Democratic Peace: the United States and the Divergence of Responses to India and Iran’s Nuclear Programmes’, *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (4): 977-999; N. Tschirgi (2013) ‘Securitisation and Peace Building’ In R. Mac Ginty (ed) *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding* (London: Routledge) p. 197-210.

<sup>29</sup> For a full description of this framework see B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. deWilde (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner).

the concept ‘peaceisation’ sounds ridiculous. If we accept that language is how we make our world<sup>30</sup> then this term could potentially enter into the vocabulary of peace and/or security studies. For now it remains meaningless.

The absence of peace as a core speech acts in securitisation studies can be traced back to storylines of research. In fact, many have accused the Copenhagen School severing important ties between peace, security and war.<sup>31</sup> Without taking sides, two cautionary remarks will suffice. First, shouldering all of the blame for these frays on the Copenhagen School undermines the extensive battlegrounds that were already well underway before securitisation arrived on the scene.<sup>32</sup> Second, the implicit suggestion that the Copenhagen school is engaging in a monologue within critical security studies or outside is misplaced. Turning the tables around, for example, quickly indicates that critical peace studies are not speaking security or ‘peaceisation’ either.

On closer inspection it also transpires that speech acts, language games or discourse analysis are frequently absent from the theoretical and methodological toolkits critical peace scholars adopt to examine peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations. An easy rebuttal that critics could make here is that these gaps stems from critical peace studies aversion to how language is conceptualised within securitisation and critical security studies. Indeed, many scholars investigating the relationship between peace and discourse have indicated that their favoured

---

<sup>30</sup> See N.G. Onuf (1989) *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press).

<sup>31</sup> For this critique see T. Barkawi (2011) ‘From War to Security: Security Studies, the Wider Agenda and the Fate of the Study of War’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39(3): 701-716; O.N.Knudsen (2001) ‘Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritising Securitisation’, *Security Dialogue* 32(3): 355-368. For rejoinders see C. Aradau (2012) ‘Security, War, Violence – The Politics of Critique: A Reply to Barkawi’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41(1): 112-123 and B. Buzan and O. Wæver (1997) ‘Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies’, *Review of International Studies* 23(2): 241-250.

<sup>32</sup> See O.Wæver (2008) ‘Peace and Security: Two Evolving Concepts and Their Changing Relationship’ in Hans Günter Brauch, Úrsula Oswald Spring, Czeslaw Mesjasz, John Grin, Pal Dunay, Navnita Chadha Behera, Béchir Chourou, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, P.H. Liotta (eds.) *Globalization and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualizing Security in the 21 st Century* (Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace, Vol. 3 (Berlin, Heidelberg and New York: Springer-Verlag).

entry points are post-structural and deconstructive on the grounds that the latter, “problematise even the critical version of peace”.<sup>33</sup> Yet this line of counter-argument does not fully explain the persistence of schisms between critical peace studies and critical security studies. Conversely, orientations within critical peace studies towards deconstruction and/or the problematisation of the Copenhagen School’s speech act approach<sup>34</sup> appear to encourage rather than negate the nesting of interdisciplinary collaborations. From this perspective, the existing language barriers appear more rather than less puzzling. On this point, each discipline would perhaps benefit from (re)turning to Jennifer Milliken’s observation that, “discourse theorising crosses over and mixes divisions between poststructuralists, postmodernists and some feminists and social constructivists. Whatever divergent claims are otherwise made by these groups of scholars, they share certain theoretical commitments about how discourses work”.<sup>35</sup>

### 3) *Subaltern and Forgotten Speakers*

Our final language barrier originates from decisions over who should be included in conversations about peace and security. Despite their best efforts, even the most critical strands of peace and security studies have been condemned as Western-centric projects at best and colonial projects at worst.<sup>36</sup> While such critiques are somewhat disingenuous in lieu

---

<sup>33</sup> O.P. Richmond (2008) *Peace in International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge) p133. Also see V. Jabri (2007) *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (London: Palgrave).

<sup>34</sup> It is not possible to outline all of the critiques levelled against the Copenhagen School. For an excellent overview of the so-called second generation debates see T. Balzacq (2011) (ed) *Securitisation Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* (Routledge); On the differences between the Copenhagen School and the Welsh School see R. Floyd (2007) ‘Towards a Consequentialist Evaluation of Security: Bringing Together the Copenhagen and Welsh Schools of Security Studies’, *Review of International Studies* 33(2): 327-350.

<sup>35</sup> J. Milliken (1999) ‘The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods’, *European Journal of International Relations* 5(2): 225-254.

<sup>36</sup> Among others see T. Barkawi and M. Laffey (2006) ‘The Post-Colonial Moment in Security Studies’, *Review of International Studies* 32(2): 329-352; P. Biligin (2010) ‘The ‘Western-Centrism’ of Security Studies: ‘Blind Spot’ or Constitutive Practice?’, *Security Dialogue* 41(6): 615-622; (2008) ‘Thinking Past Western IR?’, *Third World Quarterly* 29(1): 5-23; D. Chandler (2006) *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State Building* (London:

of earnest attempts being made to rupture hegemonic hierarchies of power and the structures of violence that underpin them, they are not totally unfounded. Regrettably, some speakers still hold a more privileged position to speak than others. Correspondingly, some discourses, such as peace and security, can have more legitimacy when spoken.

There is nothing new in suggesting that there are “dark sides”<sup>37</sup> to our dialogues or that they silence other peoples.<sup>38</sup> Similar views have been expressed and developed by feminist<sup>39</sup> and post-colonial scholars<sup>40</sup> who in different ways expose that constructing peace and security does not arise automatically from allowing agents to speak. This is just step one. For, if our dominant discourses remain unchanged, such speech acts will simply efface the agency of marginalised groups and ensure that they continue to be misrepresented in how our stories are told. However, studies involving subaltern and forgotten speakers have also indicated that these agents can be empowered if and when they are allowed to speak and be heard in their own voices. Achieving this second step is extremely difficult but not impossible. Much will depend on how we attempt to cultivate real opportunities for subaltern and forgotten speakers to be incorporated as equal interlocutors and listeners in our dialogues. As a minimum, copious amounts of contestations should be expected. However, it is worth remembering that the emergence of argumentation and opposing viewpoints does not foreclose or deter

---

Pluto Press); V. Jabri (2013) ‘Peacebuilding, the Local and the International: A Colonial or Post-Colonial Rationality?’, *Peacebuilding* 1(1): 3-16.

<sup>37</sup> R. Kapur, ‘*Human Rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*’, 665-687.

<sup>38</sup> Silencing is a very complex topic that cannot be fully addressed here. For an excellent overview see G.K. Bhambra and R. Shilliam (2009) ‘*Silencing Human Rights: Critical Engagements with a Contested Project*’ (Palgrave MacMillan); L. Hansen (2000) ‘The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29(2): 285-306.

<sup>39</sup> See among others J. A. Tickner, ‘You Just Don’t Understand’, 611-632; C. Enloe (2004) “‘Gender’ is Not Enough: The Need for Feminist Consciousness”, *International Affairs* 80(1): 95-97, (2010) ‘*Nimo’s War, Emma’s War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*’ (University of California Press); D. Pankhurst (2008) ‘*Gendered Peace: Women’s Struggles for Post-War Justice and Reconciliation*’ (New York, London: Routledge); C. Cockburn (2010) ‘Gender Relations as Causal in Militarization and War’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12(2): 139-157; M. Zalewski (2007) ‘Do We Understand Each Other Yet? Troubling Feminist Encounters With(in) International Relations’, *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 9(2): 302-312.

<sup>40</sup> G. C Spivak (1998) ‘Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson and L. Grossberg ‘*Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*’ (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), p. 271-313.

progressive discussions.<sup>41</sup> Conversely moves in these directions could, “open up hitherto closed off connections, and enable the construction and circulation of new ways of knowing and doing politics”.<sup>42</sup> So to paraphrase Thomas Risse, “let’s argue!”.<sup>43</sup>

## Talking Points

While the previous section examined three language barriers between critical peace studies and critical security studies, this section brings their points of intersection much more fully into view by outlining three interdisciplinary talking points below.

### 1) *The ‘Everyday’ and the ‘Local’*

A glaring talking point that exists between critical peace studies and critical security studies is how to speak about and in ‘local’ and ‘everyday’ settings.<sup>44</sup> Without a doubt burgeoning literatures emerging in both disciplines to study these alternative sites of peace and security should be applauded. Yet, arguably, there still is room for further discussions. Perhaps the biggest oversight contained with these dialogues is that ‘local’ and ‘everyday’ voices are still missing from key conversations about what peace and security mean and do. Syria looms as a

---

<sup>41</sup> On this point see N. Crawford (2002) *‘Argumentation and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonisation and Humanitarian Intervention’* (Cambridge University Press).

<sup>42</sup> R. K. Ashley and R.B.J Walker (1990) ‘Introduction: Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissent Thought in International Studies’, *International Studies Quarterly* 34(3): 259-268.

<sup>43</sup> See T. Risse (2000) ‘Let’s Argue!: Communicative Action in World Politics’, *International Organisation* 54(1): 1-39.

<sup>44</sup> For conceptions of the ‘local’ in peace studies see O.P. Richmond (2012) *‘A Post-Liberal Peace’* (Routledge); R. Mac Ginty (2008) ‘Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace’, *Cooperation and Conflict* 43(2) 139-163. For an overview of ‘everyday’ security see J. Huysmans (2011) ‘What is in an act? On Security Speech Acts and Little Security Nothings’, *Security Dialogue* 42(4-5): 371-383; X. Guillaume (2011) ‘Resistance and the International: The Challenge of the Everyday’, *International Political Sociology* 5(4): 459-462; X. Guillaume and O. Kessler (2012) ‘Everyday Practices of International Relations: People in Organisations’, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 15(1): 110-120.

poignant example that ordinary peoples are not getting to speak or be heard in their own voices.

Another potential lacuna in contemporary peace studies and critical security studies theorisation of the ‘everyday’ and the ‘local’ is the uncritical use of these terminologies in their storylines of research. Critiques of the liberal peace are quick to tell us that for peace to become possible we must de-romanticise the local framings found in dominant agendas of peacebuilding, and replace them with the “infrapolitics of peacebuilding”.<sup>45</sup> In parallel, we are told that for security to become possible everyday places and peoples cannot be neglected. Both lines of arguments are correct. However, their shared predicament is that ‘local’ and ‘everyday’ environments frequently are the source of, rather than solution to, conflict and insecurity. Clearly, ‘all sorts of everyday social situations and cultural phenomena’ can be seen as ‘a potential threat to security’.<sup>46</sup> The ‘local turn’ in peace studies is grappling with similar dilemmas since history has repeatedly shown that ‘locals’ frequently seek to spoil rather than create peace.<sup>47</sup> Scrutinising how the ‘local’ and ‘everyday’ are being constituted, and by whom, thus appear to warrant further deliberations. Those interested in the ‘everyday’ and ‘ordinary’ dimensions of peace and security might also wish to reflect on where and how these boundaries are being drawn.

## 2) *Desecuritisation and Human Security*

The concepts of desecuritisation and human security could also cultivate interdisciplinary collaborations between critical peace studies and critical security studies. At minimum,

---

<sup>45</sup> O. P. Richmond (2011) ‘De-romanticising the Local, De-Mystifying the International: Hybridity in Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands’, *The Pacific Review* 24(1): 115-136.

<sup>46</sup> V. Bajc (2011) ‘Introduction: Security Meta-Framing: A Cultural Logic of an Ordering Practice’, p.1, In V. Bajc and W. de Lint ‘*Security and Everyday Life*’ (New York and Oxon: Routledge).

<sup>47</sup> See E. Newman and O.P. Richmond (2006) ‘*Challenges to Peace Building: Managing Spoilers During Conflict Resolution*’ (United Nation University Press).

foregrounding these themes would showcase the multiplicity of referent objects and agendas that they have in common. In reality, peace is habitually interwoven into desecuritising move(s). Going further it is possible to argue that peace is a ‘facilitating condition’<sup>48</sup> for desecuritisation to occur insofar as successfully desecuritising an issue typically relies on some kind of peace being established or restored, especially in democratic settings.<sup>49</sup> Alternatively, (de)securitisation seems well placed to provide critical peace studies with better understandings of how various agents justify various modes of action in conflict and postconflict settings.<sup>50</sup> Acknowledging rather than denying these overlaps would resurrect what Buzan termed ‘fruitful’ rather than ‘stifled’ terrains for future interdisciplinary research.<sup>51</sup>

On a broader scale, there are also reasons to suggest that improved dialogues between critical peace studies and critical security studies on the topic of desecuritisation could spill-over into more holistic lines of inquiries to explore human security constellations. Indeed it quite easy to identify legions of new connections and understandings could arise from these kinds of interdisciplinary debates. Even casting a cursory eye notions of human rights, health, development, medicalisation, economics, food, humanitarian relief, among infinite others, testifies in very simple terms that pluralistic issues and agendas exist to draw in

---

<sup>48</sup> According to the Copenhagen School facilitating conditions are, ‘the conditions under which the speech act works, in contrast to cases in which the act misfires is abused’. See Buzan, Wæver and deWilde (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, p. 32.

<sup>49</sup> On this point it should be noted that many scholars have problematised the reliance on democratic and Western settings when it comes to the study of (de)securitisation. See C. Wilkinson (2007) ‘The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?’, *Security Dialogue* 38(1): 5-25 and A. Collins (2005) ‘Securitization, Frankenstein’s Monster and Malaysian Education’, *The Pacific Review* 18(4): 567-588.

<sup>50</sup> E. M. Cousens ‘Introduction’ in E. M. Cousens and C. Kamur with K. Wermester (2001) *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner).

<sup>51</sup> Buzan, ‘Peace, Power and Security’, 109-125.

interconnected ideas across the two disciplines. A common starting point is how to initiate reflexive debates, “without locking in a particular definition of human security”.<sup>52</sup>

### 3) ‘The Unknown’

A final talking point that peace and critical security studies could undertake together is the ‘unknown’. This topic has gained increased currency following the terrorist attacks against the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and the subsequent ‘war on terror’.<sup>53</sup> Granted that the latter milieus are extremely timely, a much broader array of anxieties, risks and uncertainties have surfaced to stretch the scope of interdisciplinary discussions. For starters, the pendulums of peace and security are increasingly swinging towards privatisation.<sup>54</sup> As these trends unfold it is less and less clear which rules and norms apply in these environments. Appraising these dynamics, moreover, one quickly discovers that there is little information or agreement about where accountability, responsibility and power reside within privatised zones of peace and security. All in all, such anomalies call for further investigation and debate. Taking stock of the boundless nature and reach of ‘the unknown’ also seems like a sensible joint enterprise for critical peace and critical security scholars to pursue given that we are potentially facing infinite threats stemming from international state sponsored terrorism to “little security nothings”.<sup>55</sup>

On a final note, it is also worth suggesting that theorising the ‘unknown’ could foster an underexplored remedy to the two childhood disease mentioned earlier. For, ultimately, it provides a gentle reminder that everyone has something to learn. If taken seriously, this very

---

<sup>52</sup> R. Christie (2010) ‘Critical Voices and Human Security: To Endure, To Engage or To Critique’, *Security Dialogue* 41(2): 171. For an overview of the promises and limitations of human security see R. Paris (2001) ‘Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?’, *International Security* 26(2): 87-102.

<sup>53</sup> See L. Amoore and M.de Goede (2008) *Risk and the War on Terror* (Routledge); C. Aradau and R. Van Munster (2011) *Politics of Catastrophe: Genealogies of the Unknown* (Oxon and New York: Routledge).

<sup>54</sup> See A. Leander (2005) ‘The Power to Construct International Security: On the Significance of Private Military Companies’, *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 33(3): 803-826; P. W. Singer (2003) *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Cornell University).

<sup>55</sup> Huysmans, What’s in an act?, 371-383.

basic realisation we might inspire and provoke critical peace studies and critical security studies to look beyond their current dialogues and imaginaries. At the time of writing, whether or not this can or will happen remains unknown.

## **Conclusions**

The tentative reflections set out in this chapter have provided an unconventional critical security approach to studying peace. What is distinctive is the omission of any attempt to provide an answer for how peace becomes possible. Conversely, drawing on the concept of an ECC, the layers of contestation constituted in and by this complex term and process have been foregrounded. Taking these considerations on board, this chapter argued that creating ‘fruitful’ rather than ‘stifled’ dialogues of peace and security cannot arise from making new sides. By now it should be clear that scholars in both disciplines stand to incur significant losses if the language barriers outlined remain in place. First, critical peace studies and critical security studies will endure as two opposing academic ‘others’ rather than two interrelated storylines of research. Subsequently, both approaches will continue to share much in common but continue to speak past each other. Likewise, the marginalisation of subaltern and forgotten speakers shall linger at best or become increasingly entrenched at worst. This chapter is not naïve about the obstacles involved in overcoming the existing language barriers between critical peace studies and critical security studies. At best, the suggested talking points raised here give both disciplines an opportunity to create different dialogues, should they wish to do so. Surely the prospects of constructing better stories about peace, security and world politics are worth discussing, aren’t they?