

CRITICAL STUDIES ON SECURITY

CALL FOR PAPERS

‘What is an Author?’: Critical Reflections on Authors and Authority in Critical Security Studies

Future Special Issue of *Critical Studies on Security*

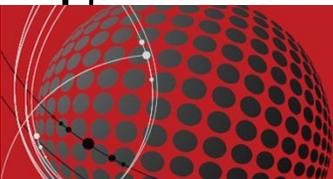
Guest Editors

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What is an author? Foucault wrote that in our culture, the author serves as an ‘ideological figure’ insofar as it is via reference to ‘the author’ that the proliferation of meanings inherent to an author’s work, inherent to language, stops (1984: 118-119). The cultural function of the author is to provide coherence, to individualize and to neutralize contradictions and slippages within and between texts. This is evident, for example, when we debate what is most representative of an author’s work and what is not. It is also evident in what is presupposed – in our citational practices when we invoke an author’s ‘authority’ and, in turn, signify our own and/or our belonging to a particular intellectual community or ‘school’. And such authority can become a problem when authors are enrolled in culture wars or accusations of misconduct and abuse.

Foucault, of course, variously resisted the imposition of these and other ordering practices – illustrating the imbrication of truth claims and knowledge with power, whilst provoking controversy with his conduct and ideas. Perhaps herein lies his most vital contribution to Critical Security Studies (CSS). Alongside post-structuralist and feminist thinkers, Foucault’s work helped to lay the groundwork for a broader dissident movement in International Relations and CSS – one less beholden to established theoretical traditions and the so-called ‘grand’ narratives of security and emancipation: Security for whom? Emancipation for whom?¹ The unquestioned authority of past certainties and canonical figures waned. If war was a continuation of politics by other means, wasn’t also politics a continuation of war (Foucault, 2003: 15-16)? ‘The political’ was at least temporarily revitalized with the promise that new meanings and possibility might once again abound. Subjugated knowledges were to be foregrounded.



So, where are we today? Thirty-one years after the publication of Richard K. Ashley's and R.B.J. Walker's (1990) "Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissident Thought in International Studies," this Special Issue invites us to critically reflect on the role of authors and authority in CSS – as well as what dissident thought might mean in CSS today. Specifically, it invites us to reflect on the truth claims, ontologies, centers of authority and canonical figures that have been (re)produced in the wake of the creative, post-structural upheaval described above. The timing of this call is in no small part related to recent accusations against Foucault,² but the interest herein is neither in the veracity nor the falsehood of these claims. The interest is in the context wherein, whether true or false, these allegations speak to broader concerns about Orientalism and sexism in the work and life of Michel Foucault specifically (Scullion, 1995; Afary and Anderson, 2005; Macey, 2004: 64, 103-109; Almond, 2007; Hekman, 1996), and the failure of critical IR to de-center structures of white, male authority more generally (Vitalis, 2015; Sarma, 2016).

Dissidence within IR and CSS is once again on the move with recent calls to decolonize our institutions, to pluralize the loci of authority and to rethink power/knowledge yet again (e.g. Abboud et al., 2018; Adamson, 2020; Calderon, 2021; Dixit, 2014). It is in this context that it seems pertinent to revisit the questions of 'what is an author?' and 'what is the author function in CSS?'

We therefore invite a range of interventions, such as short essays, commentaries, dialogues between two or more scholars, traditional articles of no more than 8,000 words. These can address questions which would include but are not limited to:

- How do authors function within CSS, its 'schools', debates and controversies?
- Is it possible to think security studies without authors? Would this be desirable?
- If the author has become a way in which one 'limits, excludes and chooses', are there 'better' or more productive ways to engage with 'major' works?
- How can we ward off the uncontrolled 'proliferation of meaning' and ideas that would result from removing the organizing functions of the author?
- Have the dissidents of the 1990s become the problematic ideological canons of the present?
- What kind of response is required when authors that inspire our work are found to have committed sexual, racial and misogynist acts that shock and appal?

For enquiries and expressions of interest please contact the guest editors Tina Managhan (tmanaghan@brookes.ac.uk) and/or Dan Bulley (dbulley@brookes.ac.uk).

Schedule

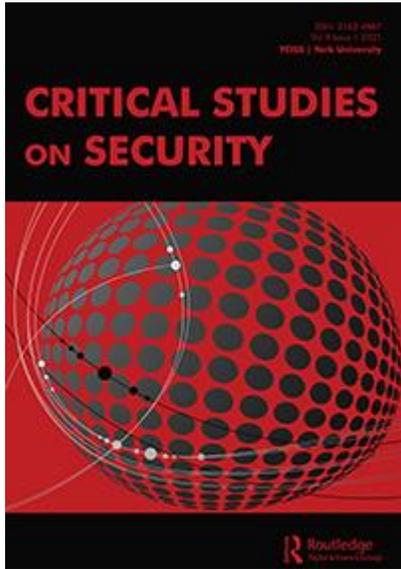
- Submission of abstracts (300 words, in English, including an estimated final word count), sent to the guest editors (tmanaghan@brookes.ac.uk; dbulley@brookes.ac.uk) by **1 October 2021**
- Invitations issued to possible paper contributors by **11 October 2021**
- Final submission deadline **11 February 2022**
- Review process and revisions **11 February 2022 – 1 September 2022**

- Submission of complete manuscript by **12 September 2022**.

Works Cited:

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¹ See, for example, Ashley and Walker (1990), Dalby (1997) and Mutimer (2007).

² See, for example, Sormon (2021), Guesmi (2021), Campbell (2021), and Kelly (2021).