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productively question and critique how it is we arrive to imagine (in)security in a mediated social world, and thus challenge the cultural resonance of the many discursive and institutional systems of structural violence that make up our attempts towards 'security'.

The notion of (in)security¹ is born, bound and compelled forward by processes of imagination. To know (in)security, intrinsically, is to mentally locate oneself within the social world and comprehend our own positioning and fate within systems of power and narratives of change, bridging an imaginative gap not only between the subjective 'self' and other social agents, but also between our knowledges of the present and our imaginations of an uncertain future—

talking about when this term rolls so easily off the tongue to circulate among the practices of modern violence. (Walker, 1997: 61)

We may posit then, as Walker has done, that attempting to expose the violent power of dominant (in)security knowledges is less a task of re-thinking what (in)security *is*, but rather an epistemological project of attempting to change the conditions under which we ask questions about (in)security in order to make those questions more productive (Walker,

Much like (in)security, mediation is a difficult concept to pin down. In its seeming ability to be everything, it runs the risk of being epistemologically atomised into nothing. To move forward into analysis of how mediation might be given consideration within the development of critical security knowledges without first framing exactly what it means to describe certain knowledges as 'mediated'—indeed, to describe the social world as mediated—would thus run the risk of this dissertation slipping into the realm of vague theoretical speculation. It would also be in denial of the fact that, in adopting mediation into a critical theoretical framework, specific and meaningful choices must be made about how to most appropriately apply this heavily contested concept. While these analytical choices and their justifications will become more readily apparent throughout the later discussion section of this dissertation, it is worth briefly addressing this cornerstone question here as a means of both clarifying the theoretical framework of this project, while also locating this project within the ever-expanding body of work on mediated society:

water, but it is insufficient to fully comprehend the relationship between mediation and (in)security or its contemporary implications. Instead, the present argument is premised on acknowledging that knowing (in)security requires both *cultural resources* and *social knowledge* as much (if not more) than any material resource—that (in)security is a social and cultural experience as much as it is a material state of being, in that it is grounded in the communication and interpretation of meaning. Moving towards theorising the ways in which mediation might shape and structure knowledges of (in)security, therefore, draws stability from social constructivist approaches to the study of societal phenomena.

The growing popularity of social constructivism in Critical Security Studies was, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, a reflection of a shifting socio

mapping moves in a changing game in order to gain knowledge of the nature of the game and its

On the one hand, Critical Security Studies research emerged and continues to exist as a counterweight to the rigidity of realist definitions of what security is, who it effects and what it involves—definitions which continue to underwrite (at least in part) the political logic of most contemporary (in)security claims. Walt (1991) provides a representative example of how these elements are defined within the traditional realist approach:

Security studies may be defined as the threat, use, and control of military f

What has been outlined thus far is a brief overview of how the field of Critical Security Studies orientates itself to the study of security as a phenomenon of the social world, both epistemologically and ontologically. This orientation might be broadly categorised as a conceptualisation of (in)security as an individual or collective cultural experience fed by various systems of social knowledge, imagination and meaning, which in turn have roots in language and communication. What must proceed from here in order to position this dissertation within the field, then, is a quick (and by no means exhaustive) overview of just how various scholars have adopted and applied this orientation to (in)security research through theoretical and empirical treatment of these three categories: social knowledge, meaning, and imagination.

One approach, increasingly popular in the post-9/11 period, has been to operationalise Fierke's (1997) emphasis on language by empirically examining how media discourse is used to construct specific 'threats', and to structure the imagined relationship between the subject (for whom the discourse is designed) and the threat 'object'. Aguirre et al., (2010), for example, have drawn upon an analysis of news media texts in order to examine the ways in which discourses of racialised 'Otherness' are employed to construct a synonymous the wayste c

Another approach has been to precede case-specific analysis of just *which* (in)security knowledges and imaginations are constructed through discourse by focusing instead on the structural parameters around *how* we are able to speak or think about (in)security in the first place. Broadly speaking, these parameters might be understood in terms of *inclusions* and *exclusions*—that is, the propulsion towards certain ways of speaking about (in)security, the ostensible impossibility of other ways, and the implications of both for the development of certain patterns of (in)security knowledge and imagination. Amoore (2007a) frames this process as the construction of 'lines of sight', arguing that the imaginations (articulated as 'visualisations') of unknowable future threat, upon which both security scholarship and policy rely, are contingent upon a selective attentiveness to some stimuli over others. This selective attentiveness, Amoore suggests, is facilitated by a cultural delineation of what is 'normal' and what is 'deviant', endlessly reproduced within media texts and deployed through the act of 'looking' as a form of meaningful social action (Amoore, 2007a: 19-20). On the other side of the coin, scholars such as Masco (2006), Edkins (2003) and Cohn (1989) have focused instead upon the ways in which communicative processes can perform the 'cultural work' (Masco, 2006) of rendering certain forms of security imagination as 'unthinkable' or 'unspeakable', and as such, maintaining their exclusion from the production of (in)security knowledges. For Cohn (1989), the use of techno-strategic discourse among defence professionals in late-Cold War America served to render 'unspeakable' the human impact of nuclear warfare, thus excluding affectual experiences (such as suffering and fear) from the 'logic' of nuclear deterrence strategies. Edkins (2003), on the other hand, has examined the way in which collective memories and memorials of past conflict inform the political and social logic of contemporary security decisions, thus suggesting that the selective construction of the way we *reimagine* past experiences of (in)security (as memories) can structure what we deem to be 'relevant' and 'irrelevant' in the production of contemporary security knowledge.

For those scholars who articulate threat as 'risk' (in the tradition of Ulrich Beck's *World Risk Society*), the suggestion that imagination may be implicated in contemporary (in)security logics is one of obvious and immediate saliency. Krahmman (2011), for example, has examined the risk-management services industry through the lens of cultural political economy to suggest that the popular framing of threat and insecurity as 'risk' creates 'hyper-sensitised societies' in which 'the big business of unknown and unknown-unknown risks' is able to prosper and profit (Krahmann, 2011: 349-350; de Goede, 2008: 161). The key process of imagination within Krahmman's contention is in fact one of inhibition—in risk-orientated societies, imaginations of specific risks are unnecessary, as the ever-present perceived reality of 'unknown-unknown risks' is sufficient to logically mandate the commodification of

'security' as a form of imaginary risk management. Contemporary risks (at least within

to bridge the mental gap between our present realities and our future possibilities in order to make an imaginary future immediately relevant to the politics of the now (de Goede, 2008;

rhythm of natural time to which we, despite our technological cleverness, are still subject (Bear, 2014). In the flimsy respite of feeling that we can know the future, there is residual unease in the temporal reality that we cannot, ever, know it. And the strength of this unease—and by consequence, its potential power—grows only stronger as the media's capacity for imaginative performance edges our fingers closer to that which we will never actually be able to grasp.

Given the fundamentality of temporal experience to the social construction of threat, there is much here that mandates further investigation through collaborative work between critical

location which holds greatest sway over how we are able to perceive threat and imagine (in)security. Such an approach does not dismiss the idea that physical location (for example, within the geographically bounded nation-state) may have influence over social place—

Meyrowitz suggests, is a sense of de-contextualisation—that is, that symbolic meanings embedded within media texts are de-contextualised from the place of their production upon the instance of their reception and interpretation elsewhere. The experience of the social, as

which warrant close and careful critique. Not least among these implications may be the potential for mediation, in its capacity to facilitate a *selective* experience of distant place, to

All of this is, of course, only speculative until Critical Security Studies scholars take up the task of incorporating an analysis of the relationship between mediation and visual culture into the theoretical frameworks used to explore the production and reproduction of (in)security knowledges. The arguments made here are intended only as hints towards the importance of taking up such a task. Beyond this epistemological mandate, there is also a methodological directive that Critical Security Studies must heed. For if our imaginations and knowledges of the political are increasingly visual in nature—as has been empirically investigated and argued by Prior (2014)—then empirical attempts to investigate and critique dominant (in)security knowledges may fail to unearth the influence of mediated visual culture if they do not incorporate an element of visual stimuli into their methodological design.

The claim to be made here is perhaps the most difficult, in that it requires synthesising much of what has already been said about the opportunities for integrating analysis of mediation into the critical study of (in)security. It is also, perhaps, at greatest risk of being redundantly vague, as it could validly be construed as a speculation based on other speculations. That said, it might be best to conceive of what is being put forward here not as a developed claim, but rather, as a brief proposal. The proposal, put plainly, is that the 'fantasy of manageability' (de Goede, 2008: 168) may be much easier to perform in highly-mediated societies. Moreover, it is suggested that tangent examination of both mediation and (in)security through a critical cultural lens has lent itself to the possibility that mediation (as defined earlier in this project) may not only bolster the power of individuals and institutions to position themselves as the 'managers of unease' (Bigo, 2002), but may also *itself* serve as the manager of unease through what we might call 'securitisation by culture'.

The simplest form of this proposal might be to suggest, as Martin (2006) has done, that

narratives of threat—and thus experiencing threat as narrative—there may be an enhanced

Thus, while the proposal that mediated (in)security may encompass 'securitisation by culture' is arguably the most abstract suggestion being made within this project, it is also arguably the most important. For if, as has been suggested, the key object of fear in mediated society is not any specific socially or culturally constructed threat, but rather the 'unknown-unknown' itself (Krahmann, 2011: 349), then it is the mediated dynamic of knowing-in-not-knowing which fuels the very social and cultural anxiety which gives specific constructions of threat, and specific knowledges of (in)security, their power. Mediation itself may be the guise behind which the structural violences inherent in dominant (in)security knowledges are able to lurk and flourish. And thus if, as Walker (1997) suggests, re

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