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Ethical Security Studies: Activism, Resistance and Security

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The practice of resistance is one which continually brings subjects into an encounter with the politics of security. Those contesting particular formations of power work to reveal and challenge the abject but normalised insecurity of everyday life, imagine and fashion alternatives, and in turn are themselves framed as disturbers of the peace, bringers of chaos, images of that which necessitates ever increasing expansions of state security apparatus. Political activism (broadly defined) thereby always involves some encounter with one's status as subject, agent and object of security. Furthermore, in making critiques and exploring other possibilities, such projects also engage with a host of ethical possibilities and limits. The practice of activism and resistance thus emerges as a productive space in which to engage the relationship between ethics and security.

The critical security studies literature has often highlighted the status of activism and resistance as practices which open up possibilities for an ethical approach to security. Ken Booth has nodded towards practices of grassroots direct action as a site of emancipatory security practice (2007: 202-203), and defined emancipation (as security) as itself '*a practice of resistance* […] a framework for attempting to actualise both nearer-term and longer-term emancipatory goals through strategic and tactical political action' (2007: 112). Similarly Richard Wyn Jones suggests that 'critical security studies should aim to provide support for those social movements that promote emancipatory social change' (161: 1999). Whilst the conceptions of emancipation that Wyn Jones and Booth mobilise rest on certain liberal and Eurocentric foundations (Van Munster 2008; Barkawi and Laffey 2006: 332), other accounts of the relationship between security and resistance seek to move beyond such terms (Peoples 2011; Kaltofen 2013). Indeed, as Matt McDonald and Christopher Browning note, even those approaches which highlight the dangers of recapturing security through meta-narratives such as emancipation tend to invoke some ethical encounter with security through the lens of resistance (2011: 239).

In this chapter, I argue that we can view the relationship between activism/resistance and security in a variety of ways. I set out three distinct but interrelated lenses, each of which places attention on different forms of contestation with the politics of security. As the three lenses animate the activism/resistance-security relationship in different ways, they also highlight different forms of ethical intervention. As such, by engaging with different conceptualisations of activism and resistance, we see a series of negotiations around the relationship between ethics and security. First, I suggest that we can view activists as seeking to provoke ethical responses to established security *narratives*, and even to provide alternative 'ethical' narratives around security issues. The second lens looks at the ways in which resistance often involves the cultivation of alternative *practices* of security which more directly suit the needs of those involved. And finally, I highlight the ways in which we might understand resistance not as a project of producing more

ethical narratives or practices of security, but precisely as one which seeks an ethical resistance to the political and conceptual ordering of security.

Contesting Security Narratives

A number of security scholars have demonstrated the ways in which public discourse and security policy intertwine (Hansen 2006; Wæver 1995). Particular discourses set the terms for who and what should be protected, who and what should be blamed and/or feared, and what kinds of security policies and technologies might therefore be considered legitimate. As many have also argued, the contested and partial nature of such discourses invites an ethical critique, both insofar as certain subjects are excluded or demonised, and insofar as alternative perspectives and responses are rendered strange or ridiculous in this light (Aradau 2004; McDonald 2008). Much of activism and political resistance can be understood as engaging in just such an ethical critique, challenging the truth claims and political implications of established discourses around security.

McDonald provides one example of such critiques when he examines the Australian Government's 2003 project to distribute an 'anti-terrorism kit' to every Australian resident. He notes that many critics argued that the kits constituted a discursive strategy designed 'to create alarm in the Australian populace in order to justify militaristic responses to terrorism, strong anti-terror legislation and to contribute to the legitimacy of the government more generally' (2005: 186). In response, a national campaign to return the kits, designated as 'propaganda', resulted in the return of tens of thousands of kits. The campaign highlighted the ways in which the official discourse 'aimed at justifying and furthering support for particular security conceptions and practices', thereby making space for 'alternative (and marginalised) security voices that serve[d] to destabilise the government's central security narrative' (ibid.). As they challenge the priorities of official discourses, activists also often look to invert security narratives, demonstrating the ways in which those institutions and practices which are purportedly in the business of providing security are often in fact those producing the greatest insecurity. For instance, the UK-based Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) refute government claims that the international arms trade contributes to security, reversing the argument to insist that weapons sales actually provoke conflict and facilitate human rights abuses (CAAT 2015).

As well as challenging the skewed priorities of established discourses (and their attendant political effects), activists also resist the designation of particular subjects as sources of insecurity. Discourses of security often function through rendering certain populations as threats (whether military, cultural, economic) which threaten the health and security of the community and which therefore call for certain forms of socialisation, pacification or eradication (all variants of securitization). Such discourses can have deeply harmful, even catastrophic effects for those named within them; as such, many have argued that ethical responses to the overlapping frames of insecurity involve reconceptualising how otherness is situated here (Williams 2003: 521-524; Aradau 2004). The struggle of marginalised groups is often situated precisely on such terms, resisting the various ways in which they have been situated as dangerous or destabilising. An important example in the UK is the organisation CAGE, who campaign against the (in)securitization of British Muslims within the context of the War on Terror while seeking to generate empowering counter-narratives (CAGE undated).

In contesting the politically situated nature of how security threats and responses are framed, and highlighting the exclusions and violences enacted in this process, activists also produce their own narratives, often framed around alternative discourses of security. A great deal of academic attention here has focused on use of the 'human security' discourse, and certainly this is common. For instance, Saferworld have argued that the recently-adopted international Arms Trade Treaty should aim to achieve human security (Ying 2012). However, and in the wake of the many criticisms of the human security discourse (Paris 2001; Chandler 2008), we can identify other framings. McDonald, again, provides a useful example when he highlights the mobilisation of an 'ecological security' discourse on the part of environmental activists, which focuses 'on the need to fundamentally rebalance the relationship between people and the natural

environment, orienting around the referent object of the biosphere' (2013: 48). Beyond this, even discourses of resistance which don't explicitly mobilise the language of security can be understood as advancing alternative frameworks for the politics of security, in which are outlined a collection of threats, referent objects, and pathways for social redemption. This would be one way, at least, to conceptualise two chants heard frequently at political demonstrations: 'One Solution, Revolution!' and 'No Justice, No Peace!' Such discourses function as subjugated knowledges (Foucault 1980: 81-83) which highlight what is excluded from the dominant discourse, call attention to its political and ethical limitations, and provoke the imagination of alternatives.

Alternative Security Practices

Alongside contesting security narratives, we can also interpret resistance as concerned with producing alternative *practices* of security, as seeking to 'do' security in a more ethical fashion. This can be seen both when subjects take collective or individual action to limit practices which render them insecure, and when they work to build communities and institutions which engender forms of security not produced within official contexts. Writers within CSS have often acknowledged that, for many (if not most) people, their purported provider of security (whether the state, peacekeeper, patriarch) is frequently also their greatest source of danger (Booth 2007: 202-203). Security is delivered unevenly and (as noted) through strategies of division and exclusion. However, as I have argued elsewhere, few within the CSS literature have taken the practices of security enacted in response to such dynamics seriously (Rossdale 2010). Nonetheless many practices of resistance operate precisely on these terms. In so doing they look to build forms of security more actively responsive to the needs of those involved, and less firmly framed in terms of exclusion, domination and militarisation. This constitutes an important series of ethical interventions. In the following discussion I highlight several examples of such practices, before looking in more detail at how we can see these at work in the Occupy movement.

Activists have long remained sceptical of the liberal model of representative politics, recognising that gentle appeals to the powerful produce minor concessions at best, and more often are ignored (and even work to legitimate the wider system) (Day 2011: 107-108). As such, they have made use of direct action, adopting a 'do-it-yourself' ethos which bypasses traditional political structures and impacts more immediately upon situations (Wieck 1996). Very often, these practices take place precisely in order to contest certain forms of (in)security. For instance, Polly Pallister-Wilkins examines the Israeli group Anarchists Against the Wall (AATW). Recognising that Israel's 'security barrier' in the West Bank constitutes a major threat to Palestinian communities, and that appealing to the state for redress is unlikely to produce worthwhile results, AATW have taken direct action to inhibit the construction of the barrier (and, in collaboration with Palestinian activists, physically dismantled some parts) (2009).

Another well-known example here is the Black Panther Party (BPP)'s practice of police monitoring. In early-1967 the small group of members around Huey Newton and Bobby Seale started conducting armed patrols to follow police officers in black neighbourhoods in Oakland, California. Taking advantage of the US's liberal gun laws, they framed this as a project of community self-defence. The patrols caught the public imagination and played a central role in elevating the BPP to national status, precisely because their communities recognised that the police were not only indifferent to the security of the black population, but were indeed one of its primary threats (Bloom and Martin 2013: 45-62). Another example can be seen in the anarchist practice of 'security culture' where, in the face of infiltration from state security forces, anarchist communities develop forms of self-discipline and strategies of invisibility and non-compliance that render them difficult to regulate and police (Robinson 2008).

All of these examples show how communities resist dominant forms of (in)security; this is a common feature of political resistance. However, whilst these practices clearly have an ethical dimension, it is perhaps when they work to build more substantive conceptions of community security that they more profoundly affect the relationship between ethics and security. For instance, it was the Black Panthers'

provision of breakfasts for schoolchildren and community healthcare which more directly (though not unproblematically) embedded them in local communities (Bloom and Martin 2013: 179-198). The principle of direct action doesn't end with attempting to limit violent practices and policies, but involves experimenting with and building alternative forms of community based on different values; this often involves producing very different forms of security.

A notable example here can be found in the document of community accountability strategies written by a collective of women of colour from Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA) in Seattle. In it, they note that sexual violence is often treated as an issue that can only be addressed through certain official (legal and medical) channels, and that such channels are problematic both insofar as they tend to pathologise both victims and aggressors, and because they are often unsafe spaces for those from marginalised and vulnerable communities. In response, CARA work to develop community-based strategies for support and accountability. These strategies look to centre the needs of the survivor, to make space for rage and anger, to recognise the humanity and complexity of all parties, to recognise the role of the community in responding to rape and sexual violence, and to provide clear opportunities to the aggressor for redemption and restoration (CARA 2011). In the wake of the failures of traditional security infrastructure to respond to lived experiences of insecurity, such projects demonstrate the potential for community practices of security which directly meet the needs of participants without relying on the abstraction and dehumanization of threat-defence logics.

Some of these dynamics could be seen in the Occupy movement. Inspired by the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa and the European Anti-Austerity protests, the Occupy movement began with the Occupy Wall Street camp on 17 September 2011 and quickly spread to thousands of locations across the US and beyond. It stands as the one of the most visible movements against neoliberal capitalism within the US over the past thirty years; it also showcased a series of negotiations around the relationship between ethics and security. One of the major interventions of the Occupy movement was to situate 'the 99%' as a collective subject of political and economic grievance, focusing attention on the ways in which ordinary people's everyday experience of insecurity (whether around housing, food, unemployment) was not simply a result of their own failings, but of a structural context through which 'the 1%' continued to enrich themselves. Whilst the idea of 'the 99%' is certainly not without its problems (Rossdale and Stierl forthcoming), this politicisation of insecurity calls attention, in a slight shifting of Wyn Jones' terms, to the ways in which 'the relative security of [the 1%] is purchased at the price of chronic insecurity for the vast majority' (1999: 99). As Wendy Brown makes clear, this discourse made what would normally be an individualised experience of insecurity a question of justice (2011).

Beyond this discursive shift, however, the Occupy movement engaged in a range of direct action practices which sought to respond to the normalised insecurity faced by ordinary people. Many camps set up soup kitchens giving out thousands of meals to homeless people (USA Today 2011). Activists sought to respond to the housing crisis by taking steps to protect access to housing, ranging from helping people at risk of foreclosure to mount legal challenges to eviction, to physically resisting evictions, to reoccupying foreclosed homes and handing them back to families (Occupy Our Homes undated). And, responding to the major role played by debt in maintaining economic inequality, the offshoot campaign 'Rolling Jubilee' took advantage of a system usually the preserve of aggressive debt collection agencies and raised money to buy up 'bad' debt, which they then cancelled. To date, they have raised over $70,000, allowing them to write-off over $30 million (Rolling Jubilee undated; Kasperkevic 2014).

The above examples show some practical ways in which the Occupy movement took direct action to limit or redress the insecurity experienced by ordinary people. There are important ethical interventions here, both insofar as the 'normal' political landscape is framed as productive of insecurity and as unethical, and insofar as the Occupy movement demonstrated ways in which community organisation stands as a response which might provide meaningful forms of security. Further ethical explorations can be seen when we look at the ways in which the movement constituted itself and the negotiations herein.

Participants in Occupy sought to organise themselves in a non-hierarchical fashion, to be as inclusive as possible, and to explore alternative forms of political relation. Of course, such attempts are always limited, frequently reproducing precisely those forms of insecurity activists may have wished to eschew.[1] Nonetheless they also reveal interesting possibilities. One such exploration is *Mindful Occupation*, a collection of writings by activists involved in the Occupy movement and in various radical mental health projects. These writings (collected as a booklet and available online) reflect on the ways in which mental health is viewed within radical communities and in wider society, and criticise the objectifying, medicalised and discriminatory discourses within which it is situated. They resist a lens which equates madness with violence, highlighting the ways in which 'sentiments within Occupy that criminalize and scapegoat "the crazies" often primarily target participants who are homeless and/or people of colour" (Mindful Occupation 2012: 24). They also highlight the ways in which particular designations of mental 'illness' and their attendant insecurities often have contingent, political foundations (ibid., 18). In response, *Mindful Occupation* focuses on the social causes of mental health problems and the harm caused by individualising and one-size-fits-all solutions. The project provides a wealth of resources for recognising and respecting the different interpretations, needs and responses people might develop for their own mental health, for providing mental health first aid, for creating peer support networks, and for creating activist communities which don't exclude people on the grounds of mental health. In the face of frames which situate 'mental illness' as a threat to be managed, Mindful Occupation looks to develop community practices which respond to insecurity in an altogether more politicised and ethical manner.

Resisting Security

The previous two sections have highlighted a number of ways in which practices of resistance and activism engage the relationship between ethics and security in different ways. In producing subjugated knowledges, revealing the exclusions and power relations of established discourses, and engaging in security practices which seek to more directly respond to the insecurity faced by ordinary people, they invite an ethical response to security and insecurity. However, it limits our engagement with practices of resistance if we only see them as exploring 'better' or 'more ethical' ways of providing security. The more radical challenge to the politics of security comes when we see activism not simply as refusing particular orders of security, but as resisting the very conceptual and political foundations of security. This final section explores such an interpretation, looking at the ways in which the most substantive way to engage the relationships between ethics, security, resistance and activism comes when we view practices of resistance as (at their best) working to deconstruct security. I begin by outlining some of the arguments which suggest that the concept of security cannot so easily be refashioned in a more ethical form, and that thinking in terms of resistance might take us further. I then look at how we might view such a resistance in the context of political activism, looking at some examples from anarchist activist groups.

A number of writers have argued that the concept of security is built around a series of images, codes and logics which render it deeply problematic, a dangerous candidate for rehabilitation. They have pointed out the ways in which our contemporary fascination with ever proliferating images of threat, danger and response, grounded in desperate but impossible fantasies of control and mastery, tends towards authoritarian political formations and the *de facto* legitimacy of dominant power relations (Edkins 2003; Campbell 1998: Shepherd 2008: 72-75). The pursuit of security serves to contain subjects within the existing order, promising protection in return for some level of compliance or obedience in a manner not dissimilar to a protection racket (Spike Peterson 1992: 50-52). As Mark Neocleous notes, such dynamics serve to neutralise radical political action, 'encouraging us to surrender ourselves to the state in a thoroughly conservative fashion' (2008: 4).

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[1] For a more detailed exploration of precisely such dynamics in relation to the position of homeless people in the Occupy Movement, see Rossdale and Stierl (forthcoming).

To understand how the pursuit of security intertwines with political authority, it is important to recognise the dependent relationship between security and insecurity. Institutions and technologies of security can only function in a context of insecurities, which they may identify and seek to pacify, but which they also *need* (and for which, of course, they are often responsible). In Michael Dillon's terms, 'it is only because it is contoured by insecurity, and because in its turn it also insecures, that security can secure' (1996: 127). The nature and content of security depends on its particular relationship with insecurity, with its exclusions and violences and particular (political) designations of threat. This regulative binary of security/insecurity intersects with others that have similar effects, such as order/chaos, inside/outside and sovereignty/anarchy. All of them regulate politics in a manner which cements the place of political authority. On the latter dichotomy, Richard Ashley's comments are pertinent:

> On the one hand, the sign of 'sovereignty' betokens a rational identity: a homogeneous and continuous presence that is hierarchically ordered, that has a unique centre of decision presiding over a coherent 'self', and that is demarcated from, and in opposition to, an external domain of difference and change that resists assimilation to its identical being. On the other hand, the sign of 'anarchy' betokens this residual external domain: an aleatory domain characterised by difference and discontinuity, contingency and ambiguity, that can be known only for its lack of the coherent truth and meaning expressed by a sovereign presence. 'Anarchy' signifies a problematic domain yet to be brought under the controlling influence of a sovereign centre...whether it be an individual actor, a group, a class, or a political community (1988: 230).

As he identifies the conservatizing regulation at the heart of the sovereignty/anarchy dichotomy, so would I suggest that a similar process is at work in the logic of security, privileging that which is rationally bounded, coherent and compliant, and necessitating the pacification or pathologisation of that which is not.

Political imaginaries rooted in binary concepts limit our ethical landscape in a variety of ways. As V. Spike Peterson argues,

> [a]s long as we remain locked in dichotomies, we cannot accurately understand and are less likely to transform social relations: not only do oppositional constructions distort the contextual complexity of social reality, they set limits on the questions we ask and the alternatives we consider. True to their "origin" (Athenian objectivist metaphysics), the dichotomies most naturalized in Western world views (abstract-concrete, reason-emotion, mind-body, culture-nature, public-private) are both medium and outcome of objectification practices. Retaining them keeps us locked in to their objectifying-reifying-lens on our world(s) and who we are (1992: 54).

In such a context, rather than seeking to rehabilitate security (and remain within this security/insecurity dichotomy), it might be more productive to resist, displace or deconstruct it.

This is not a simple prospect; refusing the social fantasy of security would, in Jenny Edkins' terms, involve 'facing, on a day-to-day basis, questions many of us prefer to forget, if we can', and 'would involve a shift away from the notion of sovereign state and sovereign individual…would entail the development of a new vision of political community, one that was not based on the coming together of discrete participles to produce closed systems' (2003: 368-369). Whilst the violent politics of security is enacted through social institutions, it is also (as the discussion above shows) embedded in categories of thought. The binaries of security/insecurity, order/chaos, sovereignty/anarchy and more impose a theoretical domination which conditions political possibility in particular, authoritarian, ways. As such, the task of resistance might be to break down such binaries This may take place through mocking, subverting or outwardly refusing the closures such binaries enact (Rossdale forthcoming-a; Rossdale forthcoming-b), or through embracing the proliferation of definitions of security as an aporetic space in which 'to think and create new social, ethical and economic relationships outside the oppressive structures of political and epistemological order' (Burke 2007: 30-31).

What I want to suggest here is that we can interpret many practices of activism and resistance as engaging in precisely this kind of resistance to security/insecurity; that is, not just as affirming 'more ethical'

securities (though they may also do this), but as mounting a challenge to the conceptual and political order of security more generally. In a sense, this is not surprising, so often is resistance framed as that insecurity, chaos and anarchy which necessitates securing, ordering and sovereign gestures. It is also an unstable series of interventions, liable to recuperation within a set of security discourses which swiftly reposition challenge as threat. Nonetheless these resistances hold open spaces for an ethical critique not only of particular orders of security, but more generally of the ways in which security orders.

Anarchist political projects stand as a good example here, largely because so much of anarchist thought and practice involves refusing exactly those principles and institutions which are usually posed as foundational to security: hierarchy, order, the law, the state. They recognise these institutions not as neutral arbiters of the peace, but as servile to dominant configurations of power. Nonetheless, and despite their opposition to such forces, anarchist politics rarely collapse into or manifest the chaos and insecurity which their reputation anticipates. Instead, and commensurate with their ethical critique of political authority and exploitation, anarchists make a sincere (if often partial and limited) effort to build alternative political institutions based on solidarity and mutual aid (Gordon 2008; Graeber 2002; Kinna 2005; Rossdale 2010, forthcoming-b). They seek to find spaces between order and chaos, security and insecurity.

This occupation of the space between security and insecurity is well demonstrated by the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army (CIRCA), the worldwide anarchist collective who attend demonstrations dressed as army clowns in order to disrupt proceedings. They have proven highly successful at confusing the police, at creating confusion, and at injecting a playful spirit into proceedings:

> [w]e are **clandestine** because we refuse the spectacle of celebrity and we are everyone. Because without real names, faces or noses, we show that our words, dreams, and desires are more important than our biographies. Because we reject the society of surveillance that watches, controls, spies upon, records and checks our every move. Because by hiding our identity we recover the power of our acts. Because with greasepaint we give resistance a funny face and become visible once again (CIRCA undated, emphasis in original).

In dressing half as clowns and half as soldiers, CIRCA provoke imaginaries 'neither here not there, but in the most powerful of all places, the place in-between order and chaos' (ibid.). They offend against the usual terms of security, but cannot adequately be captured within the logic of insecurity.

Whilst CIRCA is an example based on spectacle, such subversions are not restricted to such spaces. For an example here we can return to the Mindful Occupation project introduced in the previous section. There I suggested that it could be understood as seeking to produce more ethical forms of security. However, this may be to understate the radical edge of this project, which recognises the ways in which a radical politics of mental health needs to unsettle certain boundaries:

> Although careful to not overly romanticize suffering or different mental states (obviously, some can be very painful and disruptive, or even fatal) we see the beauty and expertise in all of our feelings. Radical mental health is about survival – not "survival of the fittest" or survival through teeth-gritting, but survival through chaos and exploration. It means observing how others support themselves – things which might seem self-destructive from afar – with compassion and understanding…It is about making worlds that recognise "breaking down" as a meaningful, important part of life that must be attended to, tended, and not necessarily fended off (2012: 16).

At least to an extent, a crucial part of this project involves problematizing the ways in which binaries of order/chaos and safe/dangerous limit understandings of and responses to mental health in crucial ways.

One final example serves to demonstrate how the anarchist subversion of authority and occupation of insecurity can unsettle the binary logic of security/insecurity in a manner that opens the space for ethical interventions. This involves a group of anarchists known as the Space Hijackers, and their attempt in 2007 to sell a tank outside the DSEi arms fair in East London. On the morning of 11th September 2007, during the DSEi arms fair, the Space Hijackers attempted to leave their storage yard in an 8.5 tonne tank. Rumours

that they would be doing so were widespread, and there was significant police presence outside. After negotiations and a small scuffle, the police agreed to let the Hijackers onto the road, and to escort them to the ExCeL Centre where the 'exhibition' was taking place. However, after a short time, they were pulled over and subject to a roadside inspection which, given the nature of the vehicle and the situation, was likely to take up a considerable portion of time and render their action impossible:

> Time for plan C!

> Bristly informed the police we had an important announcement to make, and that we would have to delay the inspection. Leaving them by the roadside, he clambered onto the bonnet of the tank, and was passed a microphone through the gun turret by Agent Hardcastle. Craig connected him to the sound system and turned down the music.

> *"Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm afraid I have a sad announcement to make. It seems the Police are doing everything in their power to delay us today, and prevent our perfectly legal vehicle from driving on the road. It basically looks to us like they are going to prevent us at every turn, and doubtlessly find some odd reason as to why our vehicle isn't able to drive. Basically Ladies and Gentlemen, we don't want to hold you up any longer as the worlds largest arms fair is happening, and the police seem more interested in stopping legitimate protest than stopping some of the most corrupt and nasty people on the planet."*

> *"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have just had a very important phone call from two of our agents who couldn't be here today. Apparently our SECOND TANK, a great big tracked 60 tonne tank has just left its location and is rolling towards the fair as we speak. We suggest you follow our agents and go to meet it"*

> Cue chaos! The shock on the faces of the assembled police at this point was a picture, as they reached for radios and dived into their vans the scene was amazing. Within 2 minutes 90% of the police had flown off down the A12 in a bid to find our second tank, the Hijackers quickly pedaling along too and the various press hailing cabs to join the chase [sic] (Space Hijackers 2007).

The surprise second tank was able to get to the ExCeL centre, where the group attempted to auction it off:

> We proudly announced that after years of struggling against the arms dealers and police, we had seen the error of our ways. That the governments £400,000 support for the fair, not to mention the £4,000,000 worth of police provided, was obvious support for a business which has no regard for human life, and certainly takes no responsibility for it's actions. If arms dealers can come to London and sell weapons to regimes regardless of how these weapons are going to be used, then why shouldn't we follow suit? We therefore announced to the assembled crowd that we would be auctioning off our tank to the highest bidder, regardless of their intentions. If they so chose to drive it through the police lines and into the fair itself, we would be taking no responsibility [sic] (ibid.).

Anarchists in a tank might, for many, signify an archetypal situation of insecurity. The abject and public failure of the security forces to prevent the tank from moving around London even more so. Nevertheless the situation is clearly an ironic performance, an inversion of two forms. In one, the absurdity of the auction outside the exhibition serves to highlight what the Space Hijackers felt to be the wider, 'ordered' absurdity within. In another, the time and resources spent by the police attempting to stop the tank stands in contrast to the privileged status of those they were protecting, the attendees at the exhibition.

The decision to use a tank was a clear invitation to the police to intervene, but again, in two different ways. For the police, it was an invitation to secure, to redraw the lines of order and chaos, to assert sovereignty in the face of anarchy. For the Space Hijackers, it was an invitation to play a game, to subvert easy narratives of security and insecurity and revel in the (tragic) comedy, in absurdity. In this absurdity, the terms of insecurity are politicised as the state's role in guaranteeing security is rendered partial – both insofar as the target of their securitising gesture is ridiculous, and because they failed even in this partial attempt to secure. The state's 'order' is mocked by a gleeful and ironic chaos, which reveals the constitutive (and

political) *dis*order at the heart of the state's security system – specifically, in this case, the international arms trade. We see not a competition of visions of security, but a competition of (ridiculous) insecurities, in the face of which one can choose either the self-defeating attempt to re-secure (both ill-fated and indicative of the militarist politics at work), or one can choose to play games in the interstices. The logics of security/insecurity are thus rendered strange and contingent, and yet simultaneously a serious and important site of intervention. Whilst the police play a hapless game of cat-and-mouse, genuine arms dealers are selling weapons systems legally and with the full protection of the state.

The Space Hijackers, Mindful Occupation and CIRCA all suggest that an ethical response to security might come not (simply) through practices and narratives which contest the exclusions and asymmetries of dominant approaches, but through practices which distort, subvert and overload the conceptual framework of security/insecurity (and, indeed, order/chaos, sovereignty/anarchy, and so forth). As they demonstrate the impossibility and violence of security, the playfulness and contingency and politicality of insecurity, and the incapacity of these concepts to accommodate the complexity of their referents, these practices invoke a politics that resists the demand for more security, better security, ethical security, and which provokes explorations beyond such terms.

This chapter has shown three different ways in which the relationship between security, ethics, and activism and resistance can be conceptualised, first as generating alternative narratives, then alternative practices, and finally as resistance to security/insecurity. This is not a taxonomy of actions where any particular practice fits neatly into one or another lens; rather, these various frameworks of analysis might reveal different strategies, discourses and possibilities (although some practices clearly lend themselves more appropriately to one interpretation than another). In opening things up in this manner, the task has not been to go into substantial detail on what in particular counts as 'ethical' in these cases (although some sympathies and principles clearly shine through), nor into the detailed and important negotiations which take place amongst activists about how to conceptualise and practice ethical conduct. Rather, it has been to show that, in looking to limit, shift or overturn dominant power relations, practices of activism and resistance are inescapably drawn into an ethical relationship with security, working to engender both critique and a sense of possibility. The particular nature of this relationship depends on the form of activism (and interpretation); in this sense, the lenses and practices outlined are vitally important sites of ethico-political reflection and contestation.

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