

Six doodles on the Sociology of South Africa International Relations

DOODLE 1937: an aimless or casual scribble, design or sketch; also: a minor work.

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses historical sociology and the sociology of knowledge as a point of entry into explaining why it is that the critical moment in International Relations has almost entirely passed by the study of the discipline in South Africa. Much of this has to do with the selective memory involved in the process state-building in the region which commenced with the formation of what Larry Bowman first called “the regional state system”. The six doodles offer a prolegomenon for a book on the life and (now) near-death of International Relations in South Africa, the place that has been called a continent’s last and best hope.

The recent passing of John Barratt, the Director-General of the South African Institute of International Affairs from 1967 and 1994, marks the beginning of a generational shift in the scholars involved in the study of International Relations in South Africa.¹ For those interested in constructions of knowledge, such shifts are more important than the formal procedures which are involved in ending one political epoch – like apartheid – and replacing it with another. This is because transitions are seldom as dramatic as they appear at the time, but authorised knowledge embedded in cultural and social practice continues. .

The study of International Relations (IR) in South Africa has not displayed much interest in exploring its history or its sociology. This is a pity because, together with the history of ideas and the philosophy of science, the sociology of knowledge provide avenues of understanding and analysis. Put in apposite form for an essay concerned with IR, their discursive practise provide compelling ways to understand the world-of-knowledge and knowledge-of-the-world.

So, because the proverbial guard is changing – and because *The Times* of London described John Barratt as the “the founding father of the modern study of international relations in South Africa” – these scattered jottings seek to situate South African IR within its historical, social and cultural setting. As will become plain, the task of historical sociology is caught in complex web of cultural import, material interest and quotidian interaction. These are hidden from sight by claims to the impartiality of “science” which mask the complicity of authorised knowledge in the making of the very world it seeks to describe. Because this is so, it is necessary to set down three four explanatory sign-posts.

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First, the impulse to scribble down these ideas is tapped from the Foucauldian relationship between ways of knowing and power, political and economic. So, the founding and development of an “academic” discipline, like IR, is linked to particular – often self-interested – ways of understanding the world. This is not a new claim of course. More than two decades ago, Stanley Hoffman showed that the discipline was firmly implanted in political and cultural formations that were particularly American . (Hoffman. 1977) More recently, Andrei and Pavel Tsygankov have suggested that it is plain “that western IR – and Western social science in general - is nothing but a sophisticated ideology and a set of conceptual tools that serve to justify Western global hegemony.” (Tsygankov and Tsygankov. 2007. 307-8) Such claim are not easy to dismiss because IR’s intellectual form, especially its search for rational patterns s of social ordering, make it vulnerable to charges of partisanship.

Second, IR faces important conceptual challenges. Not only will the present crisis of imperial war and capitalism – as witnessed in Iraq and Afghanistan – put pressure on its explanatory form but the quickening tempo of the climate change debate promises to bend the discipline the direction of environmental science. In addition, compelling changes will come from the world ideas and language. So, new insights into constructions of the international which are to be tapped from both Subaltern and Postcolonial Studies, threaten the hold of IR’s rather narrow explanations (See Easton in McLeod. 2008. 129-138) . But the most interesting new patterns well be the deepening hold on the idea of the “international” which will come from the increasingly power and place of China in the world. Not so much the country’s measurables, which are plainly important to orthodox calculations in IR, but the change to language, scholarly form and policy form which may well be offered by the emerging hegemon.

Thirdly, the central claim of the doodles – if they are srawn together - comes from the same conceptual neighbourhood. Both historically and today, the study of IR in South Africa has been manipulated to serve the interests of power. The reason for this is clear: in South Africa IR (and much else in the country beside, beside) is rooted within a celebration of Western global hegemony. How else does one explain the blind acceptance of the idea that neo-liberal globalisation is a force for good. Finally, undertakings like these are not encouraged within mainstream. This is because, as Michael McKinley has recently argued, those who remain true to the Enlightenment challenge, are not warmly welcome within the mainstream. (McKinley, 18) This has a particular South African resonance. As the historical record plainly shows, is critical dissention is unwelcome in policy-making circles: in the new South Africa – as in the old - scholarly criticism is invariably interpreted as political opposition . (Saunders and Walter. 20o5. 10)

1.

Although South African IR was authorised by imperial imaginings, its form was perfected under apartheid and its shape has continued into the “new” South Africa. Again, this is not an exceptional story. Saul Dubow convincingly shows that all forms of knowing (and their institutions) in South Africa were all tarred by the brush of empire: it could not have been otherwise, the very country was founded within a ‘network of imperial knowledge’ (Dubow, 2006: 14). Moreover, while some contestations over the metropolitan hold over local knowledge did emerge during apartheid, the social sciences and the humanities in the post-apartheid state have bent more towards conformity with the metropolitan understandings than in raising challenges to it. (Vale. 2008)

As a result, today, as in the past, South African IR is conformist rather than critical: it exercises a fealty – even, cravenness - towards the discipline’s dominant rhythms by seamlessly absorbing metropolitan fashions and styles. An illustrative recent example is provided by the metaphors which frequently direct IR especially those at the policy. Regularly Nelson Mandela’s speech-writers cued him into the phrase ‘the new world order’ while, in 2005, without hesitation or question, George W Bush’s infamous “road-map” was used in a range of African crises. Mimicking the metropole is a long-established local habit – a habit, many hoped at the time, would end with apartheid. But why this failed in a country where, for more than a decade, the idea of change has been the dominant theme, lies at the centre of this, the first and ground-clearing doodle.

A simple binary – used as heuristic device only - shows that the discipline’s South African canvas is almost entirely dominated by what we might call “Story-bound IR”. This is an approach to understanding and explaining the international through the description of characters, the narrative of events and the prism of policy. Other approaches to thinking about IR – debates on its increasingly dense theory, for example – are absent in this approach. So, as E.M. Forster’s “outer life of telegrams and anger” direct its centre-stage, the inner world - of ideas, of values - are entirely absent.

This approach to the discipline’s “stuff” – as it was once famously called - can be contrasted with (what we might term) “Reflective IR”: the examination of assumptions – both conscious and unconscious – about the way in which facts are presented, the forms of language used and, importantly, how these are inserted into narratives about the international. This is the framing of the international through a critical optic. On this occasion no further point is served by drawing the increasingly common distinction between the Frankfurt School form of Critical Theory and more

generic understands of critical IR theory which include constructivism, feminism and post-modernism. This will only divert attention away from the primary divide between “Story-bound IR” and “Reflective IR.”

Devotees of social theory will recognise that the binary parallels the distinction made in 1937 by Max Horkheimer which established Critical Theory as a distinctive arena of social enquiry. Horkheimer’s key article, *Philosophie und Kritische Theorie*, drew a distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘critical theory’ – the purpose of latter, critical theory, he argued, was to change the concepts that dominate economic debate into their very opposite. (Kellner. 312). And those who know critical IR theory will see a clear parallel between this and Robert Cox’s distinction between “problem-solving” and “critical theory” – a binary which has taken on near iconic status in the discipline. The former, Cox argued, takes the given world as the framework for action; the latter “stands apart from the prevailing order and asks how this order came about”. (Cox. 1981. 126)

Story-bound IR positions the state at the centre of a stable narrative which is fuelled by the teleology of modernity. This is a narrative of progress in which history is set a single task: establish and secure the nation state. The task of Story-bound IR is history’s second mission: patrol neatly-drawn boundaries – ontological and other - with the due diligence of the apartheid securocrat. The philosophy of this approach to task of history is Rankean: the purpose of the writing of history is to “show how it really had been”. (Rüsen. 42)

So, in Story-bound IR no effort is made to question, for example, South Africa’s rise to state-hood or its domination of “its” region. This is not surprising, of course, because to raise questions would be to reverse the “natural ordering” or “common sense” which is necessary for the international to emerge and, as importantly, to stabilise the nation state as both fact and form of discourse. But this approach, as South Africa’s ambitious and often unstable position in the sub-region has shown, was both contradictory and confusioning. Take this single instance: the “subordinate state system” – to use a term to which we will return – was taken as a given even though, at the time of its pronouncement by the American scholar Larry Bowman in 1968, some of Southern Africa’s states were still in the process of construction.

These contradictions and the resulting duplicity – conceptual, linguistic, legalistic: to mention only three - are the result of a predilection towards the importation of metropolitan fashion. As a result, while unhappy policy outcomes, like destabilisation, are judged to be the legacy of a particular local political formation – say, apartheid – the persistence of story-based IR a full decade and more into the life of new South Africa has permitted modernity’s dark face to continue in the affairs of the region.

2.

The genesis of the study of IR in South Africa was two-fold: race and the issue state formation which has already crossed this path. Because it falls outside of the regular burden of South Africa's racially-determined past and looks beyond the country's continuing tangle with race, a comparative framing of the link between race and international relations provides some light on an issue which needs further exploration.

Like everything else in apartheid South Africa, the study of IR was shot through with the question of race. Consider the persistence and longevity of the "non-intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state" mantra – itself drawn from a Rankean interpretation of history. Ironically, however, the complicity of the discipline in muting the issue of race has a longer record than that suggested by the canonical apartheid example. Recent work in the shows that the emerging canon deliberately elided race – or, rather, it quietly folded the issue of race into the explanations of the of the social world that would come to be called "international relations". So, one of the tributaries that lead to the founding of the American journal *Foreign Affairs* – sometimes claimed to be the most influential journal in print - was the *Journal of Race Development* which was founded in 1911 at Howard University. (Parmer. 2004) There is a rich research agenda in the intersection between the rise of IR and the issue of race, racial discourse and racism.

There is no escaping however the fact that race is – and remains - South Africa's great story – not only because of its codification into law through apartheid, but because racial "othering" was the key feature of the development of the all social relationships in the country – including those which came to be categorised as 'international'. And it is to this issue, "othering" in the cause of authorising the "international" that our attention of this particular doodle will fall. Simply put, the creation of borders is a continuous social processes – not a single Rankean moment as the discipline's mainstream have attempted to show. In Southern Africa, as I have argued elsewhere, this is a sociological process which has no constitutional ending. (Vale. 2004b)

But the narrow logic of states and their building is reinforced by the idea that "the national" is unencumbered by social processes. So, the Nineteen Century trope – the national interest – reinforces a positivist interpretation of IR. So, to be excluded from the embrace of "the national interest" is to occupy a nether social world which is unreachable – except by violent means – from the iron cage of, say, security policy. Put differently, to be beyond the border is not only to be excluded but to be subjected to violence on behalf of those within.

The social exclusion used in the construction of the international operates at another level, too. This is the world of national memory where

Story-bound IR excludes often before it establishes the canon upon which it will come to rest. Take this example: most accounts of the arrival of Chinese in South Africa are anchored around the mid-19th following the discovery of gold and diamonds. As a result, little attention has been given to the claim that Chinese convicts first arrived in the Cape during the Dutch East India Company period which ran from 1652-1795. (Harris. 1999. 360) As a result, the systematic exclusion of the Chinese from South Africa's international story – let alone its domestic story (See Accone. 2008b) – is bound within an epistemological boundary which parallels another iconic phrase in critical IR, Rob Walker's "Inside/Outside" image. (Walker. 1993)

Potted accounts of the discipline's pre-codification invariably make claims on times when people in social groups "developed external relations with groups like themselves". (Reynolds. 428) Although these are based on conjecture, and are folded into the discipline stuff in stylised ways which show a lack of intellectual curiosity. So, for instance, no interest has been shown in the informative work of archaeologists, who have identified Bantu-speaking (Iron Age) mixed farming communities across southern Africa that date over the last 2000 years. Some of these societies attained considerable complexity in their scale of organisation and the extent of their trade links around the Indian Ocean Rim.² (See Huffman, 2007)

Why does this antiquity matter to contemporary IR?

The country-in-making and the country-when-made took its cue on encounters with the 'other' from an imperial lexicon. To the Story-bound gaze, these worlds – the societies which had been dislodged by the intrusion of modernity - were beyond the unfolding code of civilisation which is held to be the optimum condition for all [hu]mankind, and this involves the implicit claim that only the civilised can know what it is to be civilised". (Bowden. 5) So, the eyes of self-anointed civilised do not know how to see these other worlds.

3.

The gaze of the self-proclaimed civilised world was, ironically, the cause of an early modern (and international) conflagration in southern Africa, this was the Boer War. Although this event was significant in Rankean readings of region's history, its history and sociology has been almost entirely ignored within Story-bound framings.

Instead, it's the ontological borders of Story-bound IR are constructed through the triumphal narrative of imperial history notwithstanding that South Africa – or more correctly Southern Africa- was not a major player. Certainly, the region's ranking – to deliberately use an index from the mainstream - was way below that of, say, India. The British were in India from 1764 when the post of Governor General was established until 1947, Indian Independence. They were in fully in South Africa from 1806 -the Second

British Occupation of the Cape until 1961, the date that South Africa became a Republic and left the Commonwealth. A further insight is provided by the counter-factual technique – used far too seldom in IR, especially story-bound forms: were it not for the discovery of diamonds and gold and the resulting Boer War would South Africa not have been as remote a place as, say, Patagonia?

Despite the shallow circumstances of its link to the project of empire, the Story-bound narrative embellishes the country's central place within the construction of both Empire (and draws from its legacy) to reinforce the international in the two major directions which would come dominate South African IR.

The first was the importance attached to South Africa's place in the global economy; the second is the country's location within the conceptual nexus that runs between strategic issues and what is now known by the generic term, security. These two issues have been the policy obsessions of South African IR ceaselessly inserted into the discourse by the English language which has had a particular hold on the development of local IR. Initially, these features of South African IR were vilified by Afrikaner Nationalists but this changed as the imperial dream faded and the country's Cold War position was increased judged to rest upon its founding myths – economic links and strategic location.

4.

Afrikaner hatred of Empire was forged by its very brutality – an act of violence which was itself both the cause of, and derived from, deep seated racism in Victorian Britain. So, the Boers were uniformly 'uncouth', 'cruel', 'ugly' -- an 'outback' people to use a trope which had travelled into the English language from Australia . This idea was fed by the notion, tapped from the writing of the English historian, E.A. Freeman, that history was the story of Anglo-Saxon triumph. (Lake, 2005)

The target of much ridicule was the president of the South African Republic Paul Kruger whose opposition to the advance of British imperialism was repeated eighty-years later by African nationalists who were inspired more by the globally-directed writings of Marx than the theories around European-style nationalism which had gather together those who called themselves The Boers. But a trans-historical comparison suggests that the cause for (and the cause of) the Boer War was no different from America's invasion of Iraq. The demonisation of Paul Kruger and Saddam Hussein were essentially made with rhetorical tools - and emotional form - which made war inevitable.

The construction of legitimacy around the invasion of the Transvaal representing the Witwatersrand Diggers – as the miners were called - as victims of exclusion from the emerging colonial gesture towards

representative government, rather than as agents of a wider imperial project. Of course, this would linger in the country's politics for more than a century and bring out the worst of racial nationalism. What matters for our immediate purposes however, is that Kruger's diplomatic efforts in Europe both before and after the Boer War – much of it certainly mythologised by successive Nationalist writers – were largely disregarded by those who would write South African IR. What mattered most was the authorisation provided by Empire through the English language. This left no space for any systematic understanding that social relations in southern Africa could unfold organically rather than through the imperial optic.

This was compounded by another omission. The deprecation of the idea that the Boers could established any semblance of “the international” outside the imperial gaze. The result was complete failure to consider – let alone map – the complex search of early state-lets in southern Africa for a pre-modern form of international relations between themselves and other social formations.³ Consider this: the more mature Boer Republics – the South African Republic (1848-1902) and the Orange Free State (1845-1902) – had strong bilateral links. Less substantial republics – like Utrecht, Goshen, Lydenberg, Stellaland, Zoutpansberg⁴ to mention only a few – crafted contacts which ran not only between themselves but towards tribal and religious groupings. Further efforts at creating republican states were driven by the parallel interests of different racial groups – The Griquas, for instance, who established the states of Philippolis, also known as Adam Kok's Land (1825 - 1861) and Waterboer's Land, also known as Griquatown survived for a staggering sixty-eight years between 1813 – 1871! And even today, there is very little real enthusiasm to understand micro-histories like these notwithstanding the interest elsewhere in early forms of international relations. (for an example see Crawford 1994)

The explanation for this omission was to come from the English School. International Society, Hedley Bull wrote with typical Australian candour wasas an association of mainly European and Christian states, to which outside political communities could be admitted only if and when they met the criteria for membership laid down by the founding members”. (Bull and Watson. 1994. 217) The policy effect of this was that those excluded – including the Boers and the Griquas – were to be subjected to these rules even though they were made *by* and *for* Empire and its legacy. Like Shaw's Caesar, European tribal custom had become the law of nature !

The project of building a state called South Africa (and of inserting it into “international society” – to deliberately use the English School's badge) was one of inclusion and exclusion along that contingent line determined by the idea of ‘civilisation’. This of course was not unique to southern Africa, it was integral to the hierarchical division of the world on “the basis of their approximation to the idea of civilization (the self-proclaimed most civilized doing the dividing”. (Bowden. 2007. 4)

5.

As the imperial project faltered policy discourse turned towards reconfiguring the metropolitan hold by inserting the idea of federalism. This approach to politics – identity or other – essentially aimed to check the avarice and ambition of independent states: ironically enough, it was a success in the country that had most emphatically defied British imperialism, the United States which was first federally organised in 1784. The model's success in both Canada (1867) and Australia (1901) strengthened the idea that the same idea could succeed in the state that was to become known as South Africa. Indeed, the federal credentials of the Union of South Africa were the subject of some interest by specialist writers on federalism. (Davis. 1978)

But the leaky boundary – to use Nicolas' Onuf's phrase – between federalism and IR showed that when it comes to policy outcome, the new fashion always wins out. But the centrality of the federal ideas in what was to become the 'international' – especially in the region – in the early-1900 has also been entirely ignored by writing in IR – both in South Africa and in most other places. It is almost as if IR and federal studies operated in different plants. Not a little of this lack of interest in South Africa can be laid at the ignominious collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963) which was ended by the metropolitan's long-held hope that African independence – to wit the establishment of separate states – could somehow be prevented, and the Empire preserved.

But sociologically, federalism – taken here to mean a series of networks organised co-existing along side and interacting in federal forms - continued and still does today in the region's increasingly post-colonial social formation. Ironically, then, the real debate on federation – the federation of what orthodox IR has ignored - may not be over: any future thinking on a more regional-centered southern Africa may have to take cognisance of the principles of federalism in its sociological forms.

In this debate-in-the-making Story-bound IR has still to show its theoretically and policy hand.

6.

As the idea of political federalism receded, IR was drawn to the fore in both theory and practice. This was not the result of the work of the mandarins in Whitehall, but American positivism which came to dominate IR in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1968, a young American scholar, Larry Bowman, published a piece called "The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa." (1968) – the ideas were first aired at the African Studies Association Convention in 1967 and built on an article written by Michael Brecher which

described 'the sub-ordinate state system of Southern Asia. (Brecher. 1963). Bowman's hypothesised "the existence of a sub-ordinate state system' and set out to link the 'notion of an integrated' system to 'the possibility of future stability in the region'.

Bowman's piece sealed a new way of thinking about southern Africa: the future would be determined not by (what Bowman called) 'historical-constitutional approaches' but by the 'facts' of systemic thinking. So, national interest-driven states driven by considerations of power, and not the social intercourse of peoples, were said to have discernable patterns of behaviour not only in the immediate region but elsewhere, too. The attractiveness of this optic as a way to order the world and, more importantly, to manage political uncertainty was stabilised by the appearance, four years later, of a book edited by Christian Potholm and Richard Dale (1974). The book included contributions by "political revolutionaries, academic experts, and national spokesman confirmed that southern Africa was, indeed, "a system of states". The work confirmed that IR in South Africa was not immune from a switch between metropolitan loyalties -- some of the contributions -- Jack Spence, for example -- was committed to an historicist interpretation of IR. But the mood of the book was towards systems-thinking. South African contributors included the American trained Denis Worrall, who had taken a PhD at Cornell and was much taken with the work of the neo-realist thinker Kenneth Waltz.⁵ But the policy effect of the mix of theory and practice between its pages was a form of conceptual closure: the region-qua-region could only be understood through its states.

The triumph of systems-thinking effectively crowded out wider worries amongst those who were concerned with the development international relations in South Africa. These worries were linked to the country's place in the global economy which, as noted, was one of the founding policy preoccupations. Essentially, this impulse was driven by a concern that the country could be "de-linked" -- to use a modern word -- from its economic moorings in the fast fading imperial system.

Behind these worries was the businessman Bill Busschau who with singular determination reinvented the then moribund South African Institute of International Affairs by mobilising for the building of Jan Smuts House, in Johannesburg, and linking its work into the University of the Witwatersrand through the establishment of an (academic) Chair of International Relations to be called in honour of Jan Smuts. The combination of academic study and public outreach in order to delivering legitimacy to IR was borrowed from Princeton University and had the effect of providing the discipline with local intellectual respectability. One effect of this move was to draw South African IR away from its roots in the imperial form of the discipline which was linked - through the Commonwealth international affairs institutes in Australian, Canada, New Zealand - to Chatham House, the headquarters of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

The formal teaching of IR -- at the post-graduate level - began at Wits in 1963. The fact that the idea of an organic link between the academic department and an institute dedicated public outreach has proved to be

impossible to sustain over time – even during John Barratt’s tenure at the SAIIA – is interesting but is the subject of separate thinking. What matters was the intent of Busschau (and his cohort) was to stabilise and institutionalise the academic study of IR in South Africa.

In this process John Barratt was the pivotal figure. His own training was in history: a bachelor’s degree at Wits and an MA (in Modern History) from Exeter College, Oxford. This, and his strong Christian faith, might readily have placed him within the folds of the English School. However, Barratt had served in the South African mission the United Nations in the early-1960s and, as a practising diplomat, was present at the great independence surge of African independence.⁶ His appointment enabled the SAIIA (and South African IR) to bridge the various streams: American, British, Multilateralism and, of course, South Africa’s search for a place in the world of the Cold War.

The early work of the SAIIA under John Barratt’s leadership reflected the force of Modernisation Theory. A conference organised with the then United States Information Service (USIS) focussed on the idea Regionalism helped to position South Africa at the core of Bowman’s regional sub-system. For American propagandists, who believed in the role of influence structure analysis which was drawn from communication theory, the SAIIA offered an ideal target for policy makers, diplomats and other speakers to convey the views of the US government in the expectation that these would be disseminated further through the media or forms of education, public and other.⁷ But, more revealing were two conferences, strongly rooted in economic rationalisation, in the emerging sub-discipline of Development Studies that drew South African IR further towards US intellectual preoccupations with Modernisation theory and Cold War ideology.

With time, the Cold War calculations came to anchor the other founding myth in South African IR. This was the move – driven by Deon Fourie who had taken an Honours degree in IR at Wits – towards the increasingly technically-driven discourses around the sub-discipline of Strategic Studies. At this writing, it remains an open question whether or not, in the early 1960s, it was called as such but the establishment of the Institute for Strategic Studies (later the IISS with the addition of the word “International”) in 1958 was the founding moment in institutionalising strategic studies as a distinct sub-discipline. But the conceptual thread reaches back to the US National Security Act of 1947 – a year before South Africa’s National Party came to power. The rise of this approach to understanding the international was welcomed by South Africans who, faced with African independence, moved to position themselves with the Cold War defence of Africa.

For South Africa’s minority, the Allied victory in World War II and the deepening hold of Cold War ideas had positioned their understandings of the international – and their place within it - within a particular cultural setting . For the country’s majority however, the Cold War took on an entirely different (and opposite) interpretation. Not surprisingly, the issue would divide the country – but this did not change the approach of Story-bound IR which

remain wed to the metropolitan fashion. The signifier was the idea that arms should – no, in some quarters, must – be sold to the apartheid state because they were – to capture some of the language of a theoretical and policy debate now long lost – a bulwark against Soviet aggression. (See Baines and Vale. 2008. 22-41)

Today, Story-bound approaches IR in South Africa, especially its policy end, is crammed with conversation about ways to manage the international but this energy is not matched by thought and imagination. There is plainly a dense exchange at this point but, for the purposes of this, the sixth and final doodle, out attention falls on the idea of globalisation.

The invention of the tools to “manage” social relations has its roots in management theory which date back to the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Today, it draws its impulse from the technical rationality in which the only measure of success is the efficiency which is driven by economic growth. This outcome is central to the celebration of the idea of globalisation as the only pathway to modernity. This perspective supersedes the limited form of the international by drawing the mediation of social relationships, especially in economics, away from the limitations of the state towards a globally-centred system of processes and transaction – the so-called “market”.

But a more critical eye on globalisation sees it as “synonymous with the growth of an integrated world economy...it refers to the acceleration and triumph of capitalism, the domination of neo-liberalism and of US hegemony and/or imperialism. So, in this form globalisation is for the United States, for its enhanced power and prosperity....”⁸ So, the primacy of the market is positioned as an indisputable fact in a world in which economics unifies all forms of social knowledge. Embedded in a language of control, neo-liberal globalisation uses the trope, freedom, to strip the state of its Keynesian role as the arbiter of economic conflict. Instead, and through the ironically named “free market mechanism”, global economics is permitted to determine quotidian social outcomes. The technically-centred policy form in, say, trade, development or in international finance are said to deliver social benefits to all mankind. A little bit of trans-historical thinking around this notion shows it is the proverbial reheating of William Walt Rostow’s trickle-down theory of economic growth. In South Africa, the promise of this has been enthusiastically embraced by Story-bound IR.

To succeed – and for it to flourish in a world in which economics is the *primus inter pares* – Story-bound IR has had to directly draw off the discipline of business economics and its applied end of management studies. It is no quaint pun to say that in much of Story-bound IR, the business of both these areas of social ordering have become business of Story-bound IR. Certainly micro debates – on foreign policy options, for example - have emerged but dialogue – in the sense in which Plato intended – is, quite simply, absent. Critical reading of this work shows how it has put “power in the hands of persons with a judgmental, bureaucratic cast of mind that is bad

for the cultural and even the spiritual life of the community” – to use phrase from the Nobel Laureate J.M. Coetzee. (Poyner. 2006 43)

Can South African escape the low horizons which are set by its prediction towards the Story-bound form of IR?

Ironically, a way out is to be tapped from a flowery interview with the iconic South African sport scientist, Tim Noakes. (Glenn. 2007) Like many serious thinkers, Noakes claims to work in a knowledge universe in which he knows that fifty percent of what he knows is wrong, but he does not know which fifty per cent this can be.

When will South African IR come to this realisation?

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¹ Protocol calls upon me to declare an interest: I worked for John Barratt on two occasions (1972-73, 1981-83). During this time we were both friends, colleagues but frequently quarrelled – well, I quarrelled with him - a condition that remain until he left the SAIIA. In his retirement, we grew closer and often discussed matters to do with the discipline and its development. I visited him a few days before he died and he his interest in IR and the SAIIA was as keen as ever.

² Dr Simon Hall of the University of Cape Town has helped me understand this issue in a series of conversations which date back several decades.

³ Of course, there has been very little effort to explain the complex interaction between these states (and statelets) with the ideas around "state-formation" and "nation-building" which have become so integral to that contemporary strain of IR known as liberal internationalism. (See Vale. 2004)

⁴ The full listing makes for interesting reading: Swellendam (1795), Graaff-Reinet (1795 - 1796), Zoutpansberg (1835-1864), Winburg (1836-1844) Potchefstroom (1837 - 1844), Winburg-Potchefstroom, (1844 - 1848), Lydenburg Republic (1849-1860), Goshen (1882 - 1883), Griqualand East, also known as New Griqualand (1861 - 1879), Griqualand West, also known as Klipdrift Republic, Digger's Republic or Free Republic (1870 - 1870), Little Republic, also known as Little Free State (1886-1891 May 2), Natalia Republic (1838 October 12 - 1843 May 12), New Republic (1884 - 1888), Orange Free State, once known as Transorangia (1845 - 1902) (Official independence from Great Britain on 23 February 1854.), Stellaland (1882- 1883), Transvaal, later known as South African Republic (1848 - 1902) (Official independence from Great Britain on 17 January 1852.). United States of Stellaland (1883 - 1885), Utrecht Republic (1852 - 1858). From Wikipedia. (Accessed on Thursday, 10 April 2008; 10:48:10 am)

⁵ I took an Honours Paper in theory with Worrall at Wits in the early-1970s – almost the entire course was taken up with a close reading of Waltz (1959) although Morgenthau was also required some reading. Another paper, on Africa, was build around Rupert Emerson's book., "From Empire to Nation" (Emerson. 1960).

⁶ Barratt's main interest was in international institutionalism – especially the United Nations. In today's language, we might see him a "liberal institutionalist" – though I doubt whether he would support the R2P approaches to this issue.

⁷ My friend Brooks Spector who served as a USIS officer in South Africa on three occasions – 1975-76, 1989-92 and 2001-3 – has helped me to understand this approach.

⁸ Ken Booth sees a parallel form of Globalisation. One that *synonymous with multiple and complex interpretations of the local and the global. It refers to the shrinking of space and time, the communications revolution, the confrontation of "Western" and other identities. [So.] Globalisation is a set of processes constructing a smaller world...*