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Susan Strange, Academic International Relations and the Study of International Political Economy

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Notwithstanding the very human imperative to make sense of and to find order in a life's work, there are many problems in attempting to assess the contribution of a major scholar to her field, particularly so soon after her death. These are exacerbated by Susan Strange's unique personal and intellectual contribution to International Relations (IR) and to a subject that she made her own, at least in the UK if not in the USA—the contemporary study of International Political Economy (IPE). Not only are we confronted by an extensive range of published output stretching in time over nearly 50 years and covering a wide array of subjects, problems and issues, but also delivered in a variety of forms: journalism, pamphlets, speeches, addresses, seminars, academic articles, book chapters and a number of significant books.¹ Moreover, given that she came to see her own work as being outside of the mainstream and in practice as constituting a 'critical' approach, and that it was received and considered as such by most of us in IRIIPE, it is even more of a risky proposition to attempt an overview without the passage of a substantial time period to sharpen the focus of any benefits of hindsight, and to let both intertextual exchange and concrete world events pass some judgement on her work. It is often too tempting to impose retrospective fit, pattern, order and hierarchy, imagining connections and path dependencies that were, at the time, more intuition than logic, more gut-feelings than carefully worked out conclusions.

However, in this case I believe it is a risk worth taking. Bearing the above in mind and conscious of my close personal relationship with someone I admired

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enormously, I will propose a tentative evaluation of Susan Strange's intellectual contribution to IR and IPE. What of her work is the most significant, and why? To what of her work should we most direct our attention in 20 years time? What should form her intellectual and political 'footprint in the sand'?

Evaluation and assessment clearly require criteria, although the content and form of these (necessary) criteria are normally effectively hidden by being buried deep in the historical and metatheoretical foundations of contemporary study. And IR/IPE is no exception. As such, evaluative criteria often work at an invisible level, constituting a powerful, and usually deeply exclusionary, form of 'check-box' which acts to frame the reception and assessment of new work. Conformity with these 'categories' or parameters forms the first line of defence/evaluation, to distinguish what is 'good' from what is 'non-good' work, to identify what is legitimate social science from illegitimate, and therefore non-acceptable, social science. This is as it should be in any self-reflective and self-critical endeavour. However, the criteria offered by orthodox IR and what has become orthodox IPE are derived from a specific, and in my view limited and limiting, conception of what constitutes 'good' or 'significant' academic work which depends on the privileging of a particular ontology (based on the state) and a particular notion of empirical knowledge.

In the case of IR/IPE what Robert Cox has called this 'gatekeeping' function² carried out by the 'groupies' to police the 'loners' (such as Strange) is clearly articulated by both Robert Keohane and Stephen Krasner³ and manifested in the work of what may be regarded as 'mainstream' or 'orthodox' IR/IPE. Susan Strange worked both outside of, and in many instances in opposition to, what came to be the 'orthodox' practice of largely US-based 'International Political Economy'. ~ Much of her work came about as critical and dialectical interventions in the dominant practice of American IPE. For example, she responded forcefully in the 'declinist' debate over the relative loss (or not, as Strange argued) of US power that occupied US academia and policy circles for much of the 1980s,⁵ and, again contrary to the widely accepted economists' view, judged that the USA has continued to act irresponsibly in the governance of the world financial system over a long time period.⁶ Moreover, at the same time, as part of her ontological critique, she most often characterised the US study of IPE not as 'IPE', but as the inadequate and misguided study of the 'politics of international economic relations' based on a narrow conception of international economic relations between and among territorial states.⁷ For the purposes of this review, then, the most revealing framework is not that used by the 'mainstream' to evaluate its own, as illustrated by Stephen Krasner in his analysis of the 'accomplishment5' of IPE,⁸ but that suggested by Tom Biersteker in his important but often (and unfortunately predictably) overlooked analysis 'Evolving Perspectives on International Political Economy'⁹

In this article, Biersteker is concerned to evaluate the condition of theoretical knowledge of IPE and makes the argument that theories of IPE 'are contingent upon, and reflect substantial portions of the context in which they were formulated'. ~ Moreover, 'theory is context bounded and emerges either consciously or unconsciously in the service of (or driven by) particular interests'. Here, I will extend his notion of 'theory' to include *all* IPE knowledge, as all knowledge is theory dependent. 'Context' for Biersteker has 'ordinarily' at least three different components: intertextual, social and individual. Over time, then, 'the direction of theoretical

research tends to be the outgrowth of the dialectical relationship between theory and social context, combined with the nature of the reaction of a given theoretical undertaking to its predecessor (given the intertextual nature of theoretical reflection)' ~ This conception of the nature of theoretical knowledge is not one supported by mainstream JR and IPE, and indeed has its own difficulties,¹² but is entirely apposite for an evaluation of Susan Strange's work.

In overview, then, it is the combination of what she wrote and said, how she wrote it and when it was written, that makes Susan Strange's work of fundamental importance. In other words, the coming together of the intertextual, social and individual contexts reveal both the intellectual and political substance of her work. For me Strange's work is important not only in understanding the past of IPE, but also in constructing an adequate understanding, based on theoretically informed empirical work,³ of the present and of what might be our future. This is, however, not to say that her work has no problems! It was sometimes internally contradictory and not fully thought out,⁴ and often it omitted what many others thought necessary theoretical considerations, which detracted from its reception, but it always delivered a message. That message, expressed in more complex forms and in a variety of textual contexts over the last 15 years of her life, was essentially threefold (others, of course, have different ways of making sense of her work⁵):

- Power in society is the core of political economy. Power can be exercised in many ways, particularly in structures rather than in direct relations with entities. Structural power gives us a different framework of IPE that identifies the importance of authority. To analyse structural power we need to investigate both authority and power in specific historical circumstances—there is no set of universal generalisations capable of providing understanding.
- The professional/textual and social/ideological separation of 'politics' and 'economics', with their respective disciplinary superstructures built upon this separation, makes an effective analysis of political economy almost impossible, and when carried out produces inappropriate analysis as the basis for ineffective policy. The adoption of 'rationality' by both economics and (US) political science is a flawed attempt to gain theoretical precision and scientific legitimacy at the expense of realism.
- A sole focus on the state (state-centrism) is negative and constructs a conception of politics that is not adequate to provide an understanding of the human condition. This conception of politics fails to take account of (1) the range of entities that have economic and political power, and (2) the range of issues and sectors that are actually driving politics. The most important entity not acknowledged by state-centric JR is the corporation, and the absolutely crucial issues of finance/credit and technology are unrecognised by conventional 'politics'.

These, for me, are the core elements of Strange's approach and substantive analysis of IPE. These elements come together, untidily at times, to suggest a distinct intellectual trajectory. This trajectory is immanent in much of her early work and is later more clearly manifested in her scepticism of the established disciplines of JR and economics and in what in retrospect appears as her consequent search for a theoretically informed and empirically based radical ontology of IPE, what she was later to call 'a new realist ontology of global political economy' •16 Here, I am using Cox's notion of ontology purely as a descriptive category rather than a philosophical

claim, that is: ‘we cannot define a problem in global politics without presupposing a certain basic structure consisting of the significant kinds of entities involved and the form of significant relationships among them’ ,¹⁷ From her work on finance and credit and her understanding of transnational relations Strange perceived the need to develop a very different understanding of what constituted the ‘significant entities’ and the ‘form of significant relationships’ in the international political economy (IPE). Her search for a radical ontology was grounded in a distinct conception of IPE, of the role of history and of the relationship between theory and practice. ¹⁸ All and each of which demand understanding as they collectively make a new ontology both necessary and possible for Strange. However, I have argued that it is not sensible to extract her writing from the triple context within which it was produced. And it is particularly not appropriate to separate out her personality! persona from her contribution and her interventions. She was iconoclastic and she believed she was right. This was, and is, an integral part of the nature of her argument, her message—that only by being outside of the mainstream could she provide an adequate critique because the orthodox practice of IPE was too narrow and too rigid in its thinking to allow the internal disciplinary changes necessary. Unless the mainstream itself changes, that is!

Susan Strange’s reputation as a political economist will rest, I think, on the longer-term relevance and practicality of her approach and analysis of IPE, on the viability of her attempted radical ontology, rather than on the brilliance, or otherwise, of any specific book, chapter or article. Although she produced a number of individually highly significant pieces of work, it is the cumulation of themes, issues and analyses that matters—the sense that her argument reveals a world not seen and not analysed by others. Yet it is her very physical presence as a constructively critical voice over a particular period of both the development of the world political economy and the study of that development that emerges as most significant. As she remarked many times, it is actual events that drive the international political economy, in both its theory and its practice.

If we consider a simple but fundamental point, we find that the core of political economy, the a(rediscovered) link between economics and politics, is almost taken as a given today. However, just before 1950 it was a link that almost everyone at the time ignored, but one that Strange recognised and articulated. For her it was a necessary link that she set out to analyse and to reinforce, despite a dominant social and intertextual context in which the professionalisation of social sciences, the strengthening of liberal (and then neoliberal) theory and practice and the institutionalisation of this theory and practice in the postwar international economic order all emphasised the ‘actual’ and normative separation of the two. Indeed, JR then (as now) emphasised the autonomy of the ‘political’~ while (international) economics ignored power completely.

Among her first academic writings, Strange’s 1950 analysis of Truman’s fourth guiding rule of US foreign policy turns on the problematic separation of and the necessary core linkage between economics and politics. ¹⁹ This became a starting point and remained a continuing thread for all her subsequent work. It forms the foundation of the two major empirical books that she wrote whilst she was at The Royal Institute of International Affairs.²⁰ It provides the nexus of her argument in perhaps her most significant article, ‘International Economics and International Relations: A Case of Mutual Neglect’ ,²¹ and is still the *motif* of her last published article, ‘The

Wesifailure System²² in 1999. From the vantage point of the year 2000 and with IPE (and political economy) now well established, if rightly much disputed, it is easy to forget how important this claim was, and still is, in the face of a dominant ideology of neoliberal globalisation which economises society and reconstructs ‘politics’ to serve its purpose, all the while insisting upon the ‘real’ separation of the two.

Before I discuss the question of the degree to which Strange achieved her radical ontology, I will briefly consider the underlying theoretical commitments that form the basis of her intellectual trajectory. Following from the point made above, what is clear is that through her writing, including her continuing journalism and her personality she helped to create the academic (and intellectual—not the same) basis for the development of IPE as we know it today. She did this not by the articulation of some ‘grand’ theory of IPE, but through reflecting on her lived experiences of reality, by asking key questions. The most important of these questions was always ‘*Cui bono?*’ Who benefits? Who benefits from a new international financial arrangement; who benefits from free trade; who benefits from advances in biotechnology; who benefits from the growth of the corporation; who benefits from the dominance of neoliberal ideas?

Reflection on lived experiences of reality also brought her a focus on power as the basis of her framework of analysis, her ‘method of diagnosis of the human condition’, which was her unique definition of IPE.²³ This made her a ‘realist’, but NOT a ‘Realist’ in terms of the dominant JR paradigm which sees the state and political power as the base ontology of the whole world system. For Strange, ‘the essence of realism as I understand it is the acknowledgement that outcomes, even in matters of trade and finance, cannot be properly analysed (*pace* the economists) in disregard of the distribution of power’²⁴.

It is this concern with power, and the possibility that this power may be wielded by entities other than the state, that is consistent throughout her work and led to what has been regarded in retrospect as her original *manifesto*.²⁵ In her 1970 article²⁶ she argued that *neither* international economics (because of its lack of understanding of power and its fixation with abstract theory) *nor* JR (because of its fixation with the state and military power) are adequate to a proper understanding of the international political economy. What was needed, she argued, was a coming together of the two studies to construct a heuristic perspective, across a number of fields of study, including history and business. These were themes that continued through all her work and were developed over nearly 30 years of critique and intervention. In 1997 she could still (justifiably in my view) argue that ‘the deficiency of theories of international economics has been their disregard of—even indifference to—power’, and that ‘IR theorists have concentrated on political relations, on political motivations and goals, showing a massive indifference to economic forces, to markets and market operators’,²⁷ Unfortunately, even her clear and continuous demonstration of the inadequacies of JR and (international) economics, although often latterly accompanied by a not always productive scorn and sometimes a genuine intellectual and political bewilderment, have been insufficient so far to bring about change in the orthodoxies of these disciplines, at least to the extent that she argued was (and is) necessary to enable understanding of the pressing problems of the world political economy and the concomitant construction of relevant policy.

Yet she should have not been too surprised at the ability of academic orthodoxy to resist change. Her own particular understanding of the nature of theory, her experience of academia

and her acceptance of the argument that theory is interest driven are sufficient to provide a plausible understanding of the power of the mainstream. But she seemed reluctant, as will be suggested later, to apply the analysis of the political economy of knowledge that she had first developed in *States and Markets* to the knowledge actually produced by academia, including her own. This seems on reflection partly a result of her desire to grapple with events, rather than meta-theory,²⁸ and partly possibly a belief in the objectivity of her own analysis. Whatever the reason, this reluctance, signifying a specific epistemological boundary, came to generate major difficulties for her in the broad project of constructing a new and relevant ontological framework for IPE.

Susan Strange's approach to IPE was distinctive, genuinely the 'loner' in this aspect of her thinking. Her approach was not hatched, small but perfectly formed, as a theoretical solution or code to the problems that she increasingly saw emerging in the world political economy. It emerged initially from a patchwork of belief, assumption, scepticism and observation. The appropriate starting point here is Strange's view and use of 'theory'. Both Ronen Palan²⁹ and Bob Cox³⁰ have commented on Strange's theoretical understanding and iconoclasm, and I am broadly in agreement with these analyses. As Palan argues, Strange 'detested academicspeak and was committed above all to simplicity and efficiency of expression in an attempt to appeal to a wider audience. Her reluctance to engage in theoretical debates left admittedly gaping holes in her arguments, which were often inconsistent and contradictory'. She can 'easily be mistaken for a naive empiricist driven by strong moral convictions. She appears an empiricist because her conceptual schemes are presented as if they were derived directly from reality, not mediated by theory or cognitive processes'.³¹

Here, Palan is right to argue that the view of Strange as a 'naive empiricist' is utterly wrong. Theory for Strange was always a way of integrating life into knowledge, theory was heuristic and, as Palan cogently expresses it, 'not a code but a voice'.

Strange viewed the claims of the discipline of IR with scepticism and dismay. Not only did she think that a 'grand' theory was not possible, nor desirable, but a grand theory that ignored economic issues and structures (particularly finance and credit) and reified the state was clearly problematic. In response to Chris May's suggestion that Strange does not have a theory of change, she replied: 'if, by that he means that I do not believe in a general theory of change, he is right. I do not believe such a theory is possible, or that all kinds of change in the international political economy can be reduced to a single set of factors ranked in predictable order of importance'.³² In her yet to be published 'Epilogue to *Mad Money*' she categorically declares that 'the search for general theories is a vain one'.³³ Her empirical conclusion from her long study of the finance structure dovetailed into the general sense of the constant change of the human condition and the importance of history. As Palan rightly argues, given the broad context of her approach Strange 'should have realized that her own work demands closer contact with philosophy and history'.³⁴ That she only began to do this very late in her life is a problem for the eventual capacity of her analysis to provide a real radical ontology for IPE. This is largely because of the unchallenged role that an orthodox empiricism continues to play in her analysis as part of the construction of an orthodox—heterodox universe.³⁵

However, given her assumptions and beliefs she never claimed to develop a 'theory' of IPE. In her first extensive foray into putting together the strands of an approach to IPE, she says

that '[this book] is going to suggest to you a way to think about the politics of the world economy, leaving it to you to choose what to think'.³⁶ And the only way 'to think about the politics of the world economy' for Strange was to start with the 'human condition', with the basic values of wealth, security, freedom and justice. This focus means that Strange's IPE is based in society and not the state—as both Palan and Cox also make clear. The combination of history and society as a basis for IPE brings an appreciation of change over time. This concern for the human condition, and its diversity, has its consequence in Strange's denial of the possibility and usefulness of, particularly, reductionist theory, such as mainstream IR realism. Her approach to understanding the world economy is succinctly put by Palan: 'not having a theory as conventionally understood, Strange did not feel compelled to make sense of events in terms of some previously existing theoretical constructs'.³⁷ Yet, as MacLean has successfully argued, this does not mean that we, or Strange, do not have previously existing philosophical commitments and metatheoretical constructs that limit or distort our ability to recognise developments in world political economy.³⁸

These theoretical constructs both suggested and made possible Strange's articulation of what I have called a 'radical ontology', rather than her label of 'new realist'. What makes it 'radical' is, one, its firm denial of the validity of the mainstream ontology. That is, by questioning the validity of 'the assumption that world politics—international relations—are conceptually different from national/domestic politics', it undermines the foundational dichotomy of mainstream IR and 'the related problematic that defines the discipline'. Moreover, it then suggests that a number of entities now have significance in IPE and that, although 'the state(s)' (that is, some states, notably the USA) is/are still powerful, indeed the USA is crucial to any understanding of IPE, these other entities share both power and authority, and hence significance, with the state. It further suggests that the form of significant relationships among these entities necessarily includes finance and technology and is not limited to 'the problematic of war and peace and conflict between states'.⁴⁰ Two, it is radical when compared to most Marxists who in the analysis of the relationship between the real and the symbol economy identify accumulation as the key to capitalist dynamics. Rather than accumulation, Strange clearly identifies the global structure(s) of credit (the Casino!), made possible by electronic technologies, as historically distinct and of sufficient significance to change the nature of the system of capital.⁴¹ Three, it is radical because it uses the analysis of structures (security, finance, production, knowledge) and structural power to construct a historically distinct conception of 'politics', based around an open conception of the notion of 'authority' and a working definition of 'political' as 'all action requiring the co-operation of others'.⁴²

The message of her 'new realist' ontology is illustrated by the following extract from her last published article:

We have to escape and resist the state-centrism inherent in the analysis of conventional international relations. The study of globalisation has to embrace the study of the behaviour of firms no less than other forms of political authority. International political economy has to be recombined with comparative political economy at the sub-state as well as the state level.⁴³

But to what extent was she able to ‘escape and resist’ the orthodoxy, and how effective is her radical ontology?

There can be no doubt that Susan Strange’s ‘new realist’ ontology is a very important intervention in IPE. It suggests, at least for me, a highly plausible description of the significant entities and relationships in the world political economy. It demands attention in its own right, but also is meaningful as ‘heterodox’ thought, illuminating and being illuminated by the limitations and disciplining power of the theory and practice of orthodoxy. However, my sense is that there are a number of deep-seated problems that remain.⁴⁴ Briefly, these are:

- Strange is prevented from realising the full potential of her radical ontology by the inherent limitations of the epistemology she, in practice, continued to use. Essentially, her initial unwillingness to give primacy to the knowledge structure, within her method of ‘primary structures’ analysis, denies her the possibility of constructing intersubjective meanings which mediate understanding. This is despite a clear move to accepting the notion of ‘reflexive’ behaviour in her latest work. Yet she hesitated to step further away from her positivist roots and construct her own thought as ‘reflexive’, although in *Mad Money* the ideational power of both neoliberalism and the market (as social institution) are given analytical prominence.
- She does not escape the ‘state-centrism’ of the orthodoxy as completely as she hoped. The construction of an alternative conception of politics based on ‘action requiring the co-operation of others~ is a significant innovation, but cannot reconstruct the discourse of a politics that has been historically forged by and through the state itself. A genuinely radical ontology would need to develop a language, meaning and structure of politics/political economy that allowed ‘office politics’, ‘corporate politics’ and ‘international politics’ to be included in the same discourse. She wanted this, but could not seem to find a way to do it consistent with her own political, philosophical and methodological commitments.
- Finally, her goal of constructing a truly integrated study of political economy, a necessary condition of realising an effective and consistent ontology, is still some distance away and, I feel, not possible to achieve using her own analysis. This would, as she said, need to involve the re-integration of values (‘moral philosophy’) as well as what I would call the ‘real’ re-integration of politics and economics. Structures and structural power take us some of the way, but only begin to scratch the surface of the kind of analysis I believe is necessary to achieve this re-integration.

She would have probably agreed that these indeed are serious problems, but then just got on and worked through them. That is a message too.

Notes

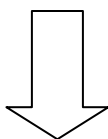
1. Thanks to Chris May for his *support and* his critical bibliography. See Chris May, with the assistance of Margaret Law, *Writings on the Wall: An Annotated Bibliography of Susan Strange’s Academic Writings on IPE, 1949—1995* (Department of International Studies, The Nottingham Trent University, 1996). This is currently being updated to include the years 1995—9.

2. Robert W. Cox, “‘Take Six Eggs’: theory, finance, and the real economy in the work of Susan Strange”, in: Robert w. Cox, with Tim Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 178.
3. See Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Westview, 1989), particularly ch. 7; and Stephen Krasner, ‘The accomplishments of international political economy’, in: Steve Smith, Ken Booth & Marysia Zalewski (Eds), *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 108—27.
4. Bob Cox characterises this distinction as that between ‘loners’ and ‘groupies’. See Cox., “‘Take Six Eggs’”, pp. 177—9.
5. See, among others, Susan Strange, ‘The Persistent Myth of Lost Hegemony’, *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (1987), pp. 551—74.
6. See, among others, Susan Strange, *Casino Capitalism* (Blackwell, 1986) and her last book, Susan Strange, *Mad Money* (Manchester University Press, 1998).
7. For one of her last published statements on this, see Susan Strange, ‘International Political Economy: Beyond Economics and International Relations’, *Economies et Sociétés: Relations économiques internationales*, Serie P. No. 4 (1998), pp. 5—26.
8. Krasner, ‘The accomplishments of international political economy’, pp. 108—27.
9. Thomas I. Biersteker, ‘Evolving Perspectives on International Political Economy: Twentieth Century Contexts and Discontinuities’, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1993), pp. 7—33.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
12. See Roger Tooze, *Reflections on International Political Economy* (Manchester University Press, forthcoming).
13. Ronen Palan has provided an excellent analysis of the distinctiveness of Susan Strange’s theoretical position. See Palan, ‘Susan Strange 1923—1998: A Great international Relations Theorist’, *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1999), pp. 121—32.
14. *Ibid.*
15. See, for example, Chris May, “‘Strange Fruit’: Susan Strange’s Theory of Structural Power in the International Political Economy”, *Global Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1996), pp. 167—89.
16. See Susan Strange, ‘Territory, state, authority and economy: a new realist ontology of global political economy’, in: Robert w. Cox (Ed.), *The New Realism* (Macmillan, 1997), pp. 3—19.
17. Robert Cox, ‘Towards a post-hegemonic conceptualization of world order: reflections on the relevancy of Ibn Khaldun’, in: IN. Rosenau & E—O. Czempiel (Eds), *Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 132.
18. See May, “‘Strange Fruit’”; Palan, ‘Susan Strange 1923—1998’; and Cox, “‘Take Six Eggs’” for discussions of Strange’s theoretical position.
19. Susan Strange, ‘Truman’s Point Four’, *Year Book of World Affairs 1950* (Stevens, 1950), pp. 264—88.
20. Susan Strange, *Sterling and British Policy* (Oxford University Press/RIIA, 1971); and Andrew Shonfield (Ed.), *International Monetary Relations*, Vol. 2 of: *International Economic Relations of the Western World 1959—71* (Oxford University Press/RIIA, 1976). For comment on the centrality of these to Strange’s work, see Chris Brown, ‘Susan Strange—A Critical Appreciation’, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1999), pp. 531—5.

21. Susan Strange, 'International Economics and International Relations: A Case of Mutual Neglect', *International Affairs*, Vol. 46 (1970), pp. 304—17.
22. Susan Strange, 'The westfailure System', *Review of international Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1999), pp. 345—54.
23. This was articulated in Strange's first book length discussion of her approach to WE, *States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy* (Pinter, 1988), p. 16.
24. Susan Strange, 'Territory, state, authority, and economy', p. 4.
25. See Cox, "'Take Six Eggs'"; and Brown, 'Susan Strange'.
26. Strange, 'International Economics and International Relations'.
27. Strange, 'Territory, state, authority and economy', p. 6.
28. See Palan, 'Susan Strange', p. 126.
29. *Ibid*
30. Con, 'Take Six Eggs'.
31. Palan, 'Susan Strange', p. 122—3.
32. Susan Strange, 'A Reply to Chris May', *Global Society*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1996), pp. 303—5.
33. Susan Strange, 'Finance in Politics: An Epilogue to *Mad Money*', manuscript, The Estate of Susan Strange (1998). To be published in the second edition of *Mad Money*.
34. Palan, 'Susan Strange', p. 126.
35. John MacLean provides a path-breaking analysis of this problem in 'Philosophical roots of globalization and philosophical routes to globalization', in: Randall D. Germain (Ed.), *Globalization and its Critics: Perspectives from Political Economy* (Macmillan/PERC, 2000), pp. 3—66.
36. Strange, *States and Markets*, p. 9.
37. Palan, 'Susan Strange', p. 129.
38. See MacLean, 'Philosophical roots of globalization and philosophical routes to globalization'.
39. See Strange, 'Finance in Politics'.
40. *Ibid*. For Strange's extended analysis of this, see, initially, John Stopford & Susan Strange, with John S. Henley, *Rival States Rival Firms: Competition for World Market Shares* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Strange, 'Territory, state, authority and economy'.
41. See Cox's comments in "'Take Six Eggs'", especially pp. 179—83.
42. Strange, *The Retreat of the State*, p. 40.
43. Strange, 'The westfailure System', p. 354.
44. These are considered in much more detail in Tooze, *Reflections on International Political Economy*.

NOTA:

Segue-se a apresentação que foi feita deste artigo pela revista francesa *Alternatives Économiques* de Outubro 2000.



(Cf. *Alternatives Économiques*, Paris, n° 185, Outubro 2000, p. 86)

LES ANNÉES SUSAN STRANGE

Il y a deux ans disparaissait Susan Strange, une chercheuse britannique reconnue aux Etats-Unis, au Japon, en Italie, aux Pays-Bas, au Royaume-Uni, etc., et qui reste encore peu lue en France. Une situation d'autant plus injuste que Strange connaissait bien les débats français, s'appuyant souvent sur les travaux de Fernand Braudel et sur ceux de l'école de la régulation.

Cette notoriété internationale, Strange la devait au fait qu'elle n'a fait rien de moins qu'inventer une nouvelle discipline pour penser les évolutions du monde: l'économie politique internationale (EPI). Dans un célèbre article de 1970, elle se demandait, plus de vingt ans avant tout le monde, comment créer les conditions d'un contrôle politique d'une économie de plus en plus mondialisée. C'est pour définir les outils nécessaire permettant de répondre à cette question qu'elle a créé l'EPI.

Le professeur Roger Tooze, qui a accompagné sa réflexion pendant plus de trente ans, propose dans le dernier numéro de la revue *New Political Economy* un bilan de l'apport intellectuel de Susan Strange, qui représente une excellente introduction à ses travaux. Si l'on souhaite être le plus synthétique possible, nous explique Tooze, on peut dire que Strange a transmis trois messages importants.

Premier message: le pouvoir est le concept clé pour comprendre l'économie politique mondiale. Il s'exerce de multiples façons et plus particulièrement dans les structures générales de l'économie mondiale, plutôt que dans les relations directes entre acteurs.

On ne peut comprendre le pouvoir dans l'absolu, ajoute Strange, mais seulement dans des circonstances historiques précises. Comme elle l'a fait remarquer de nombreuses fois, ce sont les événements qui guident les grandes évolutions de l'économie politique internationale et la façon dont on essaie de les théoriser.

Deuxième message: la séparation entre les approches, les idées et les fondements des disciplines de la science économique et de la science politique conduit à des analyses erronées, qui sont à la base de mauvais conseils d'action politique. Cette position nourrissait les combats menés par Strange dans les différentes universités où elle a enseigné pour faire admettre aux spécialistes de sciences politiques que la politique n'est pas un monde autonome de l'économie, obéissant à ses propres lois. Et que les relations internationales n'ont rien de particulier par rapport aux relations politiques domestiques. Dans le même temps, elle cherchait à convaincre les économistes qu'ils ne pouvaient avoir un discours sérieux s'ils persistaient à ignorer les phénomènes de pouvoir. D'où son appel pour un retour à l'économie politique des origines, celle où les chercheurs sont formés à une approche pluridisciplinaire.

Troisième message: les approches « stato-centrées »
– celles qui font des Etats les seuls acteurs pertinents d'analyse – sont insuffisantes et conduisent à une analyse trop restrictive de ce qu'est la politique. Elles oublient que d'autres acteurs importants détiennent du pouvoir (les multinationales, les banques, la mafia...) et que celui-ci trouve sa source dans des endroits – la finance et le crédit, l'innovation technologique – dont l'influence est sous-estimée par l'approche politique traditionnelle.

À travers ses écrits et ses fonctions universitaires, Susan Strange a été le catalyseur de la création de départements universitaires d'EPI partout dans le monde, installant une discipline désormais institutionnalisée avec ses réseaux, ses revues, ses colloques internationaux et ses diplômes. Pourtant, Strange s'est toujours refusée à jouer les gourous. Elle ne croyait pas, nous rappelle Roger Tooze, à la possibilité d'établir une grande théorie du changement social, une explication qui puisse être fondée sur un nombre limité de facteurs, hiérarchisés dans un ordre d'importance immuable. Elle se contentait de poser des questions dont la plus importante est *Cui bono?* Qui gagne, qui perd ? A qui profite la libéralisation financière ? A qui profite le développement des biotechnologies ? A qui profite la mise en avant des idées libérales ? etc. ~Strange refusait que l'EPI soit considérée comme un Eldorado des sciences sociales. La seule définition qu'elle en a donné en trente ans de publications était la suivante : « *Une méthode de diagnostic de la condition humaine.* »

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Références: Susan Strange, Academic International Relations and the study International Political Economy ~, par Roger Tooze, *New Political Economy*, vol. 5, n° 2, juillet 2000. Pour se procurer la revue, voir www.tandf.co.uk/journals