
Gillian Rose's untimely death at the age of 48 in December 1995 cut short the life of an extraordinary person and an academic career full of achievement but which promised another phase of creative application of her philosophical perspectives to issues of social and political thought. In her last year she had published a strikingly original first volume of autobiography (the nearest genre under which it could be subsumed) entitled Love's Work (Chatto & Windus, 1995) to wide critical acclaim, reaching a far wider non-academic and feminist public than ever before and was engaged in a variety of writing projects some of which she completed before her death and which are to be published in the next year or two. She had achieved sufficiently wide recognition through her academic books and not least perhaps through her very unusual autobiographical volume to warrant four obituaries in the London quality dailies.

Of Polish-Jewish background, her philosophical vocation awakened early. She was however deeply dissatisfied with the linguistic philosophy she encountered whilst reading PFE and her aversion to all styles of analytical philosophy meant that she had a more difficult time in achieving recognition as a philosopher than if she had made compromises with the dominant mode of philosophical discourse in the English-speaking world. Despite the trials of her undergraduate career at Oxford, she was, I believe, happy at St Antony's in the early 1970s where she was able to pursue a heterodox topic (Adorno's social thought), to find interlocutors with similarly unconventional intellectual interests (the extra-curricular seminar I organised to bring together these brilliant graduate students working in the College and outside on then little-known figures of Continental European thought was a memorable experience for all concerned) and to make very fruitful forays to Columbia and Heidelberg Universities. In an interview to the THEES a few months before her death she alluded to the sympathy of the émigré scholars who afforded her intellectual shelter in the pursuit of her then somewhat perplexing topic (her D. Phil. examiners were Leszek Kolakowski and myself).

Her thesis, somewhat revised, was published as The Melancholy Science: and introduction to the thought of Theodor W. Adorno (Macmillan, 1978) one of the first books to be published on Adorno in the English-speaking world. Having mastered "Adorno Deutsch" she could have pursued her work on cognate lines to become the leading authority on the Frankfurt School in Britain thereby establishing herself in a comfortable and enduring academic niche. Instead the tack on the even more daunting task of working through the language and system of Hegel's metaphysics: the first major fruit of this enterprise was her second book published under the combative title of Hegel Contra Sociology (London, Athlone Press, 1981). In it she settled accounts with mainstream social theory by exposing (as she thought) its roots and presuppositions in neo-Kantian value theory. This first part of the book represents a monograph in its own right which deserves to be published separately, owing to its special interest for the philosophy of social science. The main body of the book was cast in an expository form but the special understanding of Hegel's project which she achieved thereby pervades all her subsequent work even when this is not made explicit and informs her discussions of all the diverse issues which she came to tackle in a score of important essays.

Her Hegelian perspectives provided her with an unusual and very forceful critical platform from which to engage contemporary currents of thought: her critical appraisals of modish figures such as Derrida are always unconventional and particularly stimulating for this very reason as she showed in her contribution to the first Oxford seminar series on post-modernist thought organised by Dr Jonathan Webber (OA) and myself. Her critical essays on the French Left Nietzscheans and crypto-Heideggerians who had cast a spell on so much of British and indeed American scholarship in both sociology and the humanities over the last three decades can be found in her collection of essays The Dialectic of Nihilism: post-structuralist and law (Basil Blackwell, 1984).

Her understanding of the Hegelian metaphysical outlook was set forth in most sustained fashion in her boldest but also most exigent - many would say hermetic - work The Broken Middle: out of our ancient society (Blackwell, 1992), a work which despite its considerable difficulty to some extent has created its own readership (though her academic books are available in paperback). The intellectual embodiment of this particular work can be stated in the words of her best commentator yet: the rephrasing of the Hegelian project in something like its full ambition. For more than a decade her interests had embraced law and theology and even though her term 'law' is deployed in an idiosyncratic or rather system-specific way to encompass all forms of sociality, philosophers of law in the more conventional sense may yet draw on her work for inspiration at least. Her writing brings metaphysics, especially perhaps her understanding of the Phenomenology of Spirit, to bear on love, law and violence (all to be understood in her own fashion).

With her increasing body of demanding texts, which attracted many remarkable graduate students, a number of whom have already made substantial contributions in cognate areas of endeavour, she was able to attain formal recognition of an academic kind - not at Sussex where she researched and taught for so many years but at Warwick where she was appointed to a Chair of Social and Political Thought with links to Philosophy, Sociology and Jewish Studies. Tragically, she was struck by cancer which she fought courageously as she describes movingly in Love's Work. Despite the very adverse circumstances she continued to write a great deal and found more readers from a wider constituency than ever before (and she was very happy to reach out to them).

Comparisons have inevitably been made between her and a number of other leading Jewish women philosophers of the twentieth century especially those with extraordinary life-experiences, life-engagements and spiritual quests, such as Hannah Arendt and even more in some ways Simone Weil. It is, of course, premature to make a definitive judgement of her achievement. Of course she knew
their work well and her interest in Weil was partly explained in any case by her own similar complex engagement over some years with both Judaism and Christianity - Gillian was received into the Anglican communion on her last day. In *Judaism and Modernity* (1993) her last collection of essays and perhaps the most accessible and engaging of her five academic books, she discussed Weil and a number of other thinkers in connexion with Jewish traditions in a very illuminating way.

No formal obituary notice can ever convey the personal qualities known to her friends. We will remember her extraordinary physical presence, her voice and superb delivery (hearing her reading a chapter from her autobiographical writing was an unforgettable experience), her beauty and elegance, her love of life and extraordinary courage and fortitude in facing her protracted illness and her generosity and thoughtfulness to others on her last days embodying a true *ars moriendi* for our times.

*Herminio Martins*