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Thesis Title:

THE "VOID" IN SIMONE WEIL AND

THE "BROKEN MIDDLE"

IN GILLIAN ROSE:

The Genesis of the Search for Salvation

Gregory David Parry

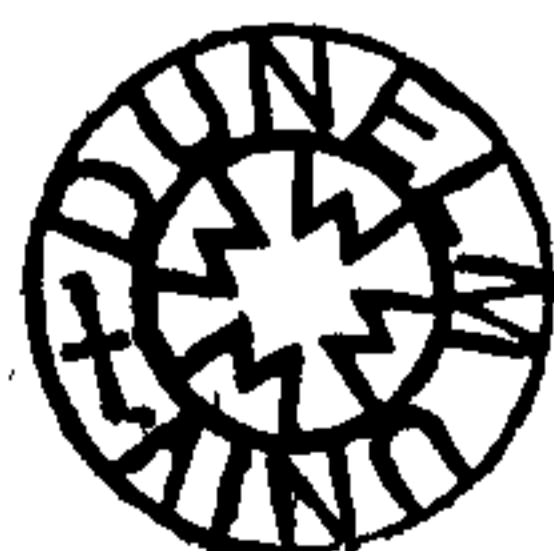
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Chapter V: Hegel's Legacy and the Enlightenment of Gillian Rose

God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things;[everything] starts from God and returns to God. God is the one and only object of philosophy.³⁶

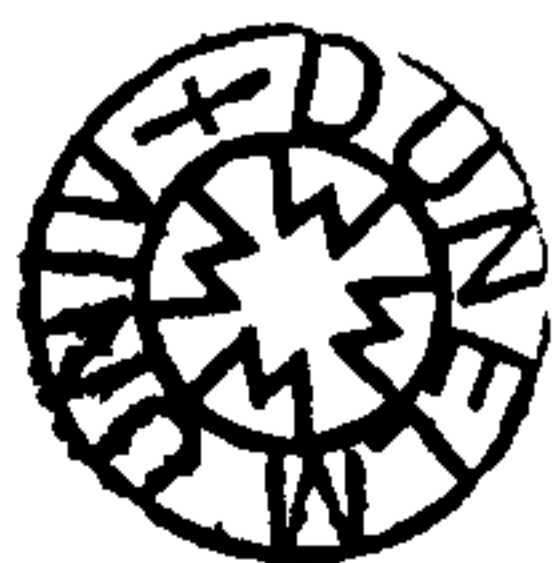
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5.1 Introduction

We are at the stage of having introduced the nature of Rose's broken middle and the way in which it evolves into her reconfiguration of social, political and theological theorising and practice. The aim of this chapter is to ascertain the dynamics and complexities that give rise to the nature of Rose's thought and relation to contradiction. Further, it engages with her radical interpretation of Hegel. In many ways she bases her exegesis of Hegel upon the approach he takes towards metaphysics with his philosophical contemporaries, Kant, Fichte and Schelling, during the development of the Enlightenment period. This approach I will highlight in due course, but for now the central approach that I introduce earlier through a variety of examples, is the way in which Rose drives her attention towards the origins of metaphysical concern. This indicates the way in which theorising sustains for her some kind of practical intelligibility through exchange and negotiation on a level that is communicative and substantive. Thus Rose takes the rejection of metaphysics, like the British Theologian, Rowan Williams, quite seriously: to abolish metaphysics subjects us to dogmatism and the realisation that if we do follow through with a rejection of it, 'we fail to read "reality" or "actuality" as *difficult*'.³⁷ This, as I have mentioned in one way or another elucidates modernity and post-modernity's dilemma, its fascination with 'difference', and therefore, its tendency to alienate metaphysics through a variety of critical strategies that exalt 'the other' so that otherness becomes un-thinkable and loses the difficulty of actuality.

³⁶ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 1, ed. and trans. P. C. Hodgson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984-87), p. 84.

³⁷ R. D. Williams 'Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose', p. 3.



It is this sense of tension or contradiction in reality that Rose develops through her radical interpretation of Hegel. Rose is keen to show how anything that is thought falls into the bracket of our having some sort of relation to the activity of the thinking of the thought. In other words, Rose wants to avoid the functionality of a system in which ideas and theories that fall into some abstract, un-definable, unrecognisable world, presupposing dualistic thinking in which the object thought is irrevocably divided from the subject that is doing the thinking. With this in mind, we can understand why Hegel postulates that to see the absolute, for example, in its infinite modality without any 'condition' for finite operations, seems then to exclude the realm of finite sensibility from it.³⁸ Rose is intent to avoid this kind of cognitive procedure preferring rather to live with and embrace the tension in ways that will emerge in following discussions.

For now however, attention turns to a brief exploration of the genesis of Rose's thought through Hegel, following which will be an inquiry into Hegel's legacy and how his system attempts to re-conceive and overcome (not resolve) the dualistic idea proposed by his opponents, Kant and Fichte, that thought and reality were irrevocably divided. This in turn will illuminate Gillian Rose and her intent to re-conceive a similar problem she identifies in modernity and post-modernity.

5.2 *Rose and Hegel: The Connection of Thought*

This issue of the dualistic divide between thought and reality and attempts to use it in order to resolve the difficulty of understanding is exemplified by Rose's passionate re-evaluation of the limitations of dualistic modes of thinking, particularly in their Kantian form. As I have indicated early in the 'Introduction', she illustrates this through her reading of Hegel in her book *Hegel Contra Sociology* which I will discuss further in the next chapter. Contrary to Simone Weil for example, Rose is willing to work with the illusions of social relations insofar that illusion is implicitly contained and unavoidably reproduced by social theory. She therefore, avoids any attempt to reconstruct sociology within a new ideological framework. Rose's dialectic here skilfully chooses a tortuous path, or rather as it might appear from my earlier mentions of the broken middle, a series

³⁸ POS, § 16.

of initially divergent but nevertheless ultimately convergent paths, that during the development of her use of contradiction, enable us to discover the contradictions of our own position, or even to admit unforeseen conclusions which sociology, for example, struggles to conceive. Contrary to the broken middle, social theory already knows the end in sight with the beginnings it makes, so that we who read it are only able to experience it as an abstract ideal rather than knowing it in consciousness in order to experience it.

The result is that sociological certainties cannot be negated and are therefore unable to comprehend their fate in order to move forward in any substantial way. Such retrieval illustrates the idea of the 'broken middle', the experience of contradiction, which is the loss, negativity, of self in order to comprehend the self. And since an experience of contradiction is known by the presence of individual self-consciousness, already in the broken middle,³⁹ the individual unwilling to risk its life in order to attain to the truth of this recognition, falls into a 'gap' that is dualistic, attempting then to overcome contradictions and aporias. The result of this, for Hegel, means the middle term, the universal, collapses into a lifeless unity which is split into lifeless, merely immediate, unopposed extremes that have no relation with one another.⁴⁰ This indicates that Hegel had some conceptual idea of the broken middle, for in the case of coming to know the middle in unity one is unable to take 'extremes with opposite characteristics' and allow them to 'reciprocally give and receive one another back from each other consciously'.⁴¹

With these cognitive themes addressed, and the sense in which the genesis of Rose's broken middle appears in Hegel's metaphysics, it is no surprise then to see her reconsider the way in which Hegel has been misunderstood, particularly in relation to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The *Phenomenology* examines the progress of consciousness moving and striving to the absolute Spirit. Scholars have suggested how consciousness in Hegel's system absorbs its objects so that the duality of subject and object is overcome and consciousness is left with nothing outside of itself.⁴² Rose on the other hand, wants to show that the thinking subject in relation to the object thought yields to the contradictions

³⁹ See p. 6 of this thesis. See also, CAE, p. 2 & 6.

⁴⁰ POS, § 188.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Rowan Williams also mentions this point in his essay. See R. D. Williams, 'Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose', p. 9. See also, D. Kolb, *The Critique of Pure Modernity: Hegel, Heidegger and After* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986).

of this opposition, rather than attempting to think that one has to overcome this separation. Further, in every moment in which this speculative recognition takes place, (self-aware thinking) which addresses the untruthfulness of consciousness that considers the knowingness of the middle, absolute or substance as an abstract, unified statement, there is another simultaneous moment of 'salutary error' which ensures that no position is fixed upon a point of recognition. Every form of recognition is subject to speculation. Contradictory experience then becomes perpetual and never-ending in order to empower us so that we might attempt transformation through action.

With such existential commitment in mind, Rose would argue that Hegel started with the absolute Spirit as well in the development of consciousness – hidden in the background or underneath the beginning. In this case, Rose like Hegel, points out that all beginnings and presuppositions are arduous in philosophy and metaphysics.⁴³ This radical interpretation in which Hegel's consciousness is always moving, in the sense that it is endlessly dismantled and reconceived, is argued by another Hegelian philosopher. Peter Osborne discusses Hegel's 'phenomenological critique of consciousness' as a movement of self-subversion rather than a movement that promotes the possibility of self-transformation. What this implies is that social theory cannot even work towards the practice of transformation.⁴⁴ Osborne, therefore, compares Rose's argument to the negative dialectic of the philosopher and political thinker, Theodor Adorno, as the pathos of perpetual negation.⁴⁵ Osborne sees in Rose her perpetuation of negation in Hegel's phenomenological method which amounts to both Rose and Hegel's inability to recognise the actuality in thinking and therefore, to conceive the thinking of the transforming capacity of actuality. While this has yet to be discussed in detail, particularly in relation to Hegel's legacy itself, there is Rose's essay, 'From Speculative to Dialectical Thinking – Hegel and Adorno' in which, contrary to Osborne's

⁴³ This idea about the illusion of 'beginnings' and 'ends' I will discuss in connection to Rose's systematic presentation of the broken middle. It nevertheless, continues especially the point that she raises in relation to social theory, which is the anxiety of its beginnings with the view of an end in hindsight. In this way, social theory like other political and theological hermeneutics which I discuss over the next several chapters, avoid their relation to the broken middle, and rather set-up conceptual, 'other-worldly' terms that attempt to heal, rather than struggle with the 'gap' between the universal and particular.

⁴⁴ See P. Osborne, 'Hegelian Phenomenology and the Critique of Reason and Society', in *Radical Philosophy* 32 (1982), 7-16.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, 15. See also, T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973).

misconception, she distances her thinking from that of Adorno, and in which she sees the speculative phase of Hegelianism a step further on from the ‘dialectical’:

Philosophical content has in its method and soul three forms: it is 1, abstract, 2, dialectical and 3, speculative. It is abstract insofar as it takes place generally in the element of thought. Yet as merely abstract it becomes – in contrast to the dialectical and speculative forms – the so-called understanding which holds determinations fast and comes to know them in their fixed distinction. The dialectical is the movement and confusion of such fixed determinateness; it is negative reason. The speculative is positive reason, the spiritual, and it alone is really philosophical [...].⁴⁶

The suppression therefore, of the speculative phase which Rose attributes to Adorno’s method of thought, registers one fundamental error in Osborne’s analysis: he fails to break through the opposition between thought and reality, the duality ‘between the active Inside and the passive Outside’.⁴⁷ Rose’s quest on this issue begins with her first book, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno*, in which she sets out a discussion of a contemporary speculative thinker who chooses not to think in oppositions and dichotomies. Adorno fails to fit her expectations, because for Rose the nature of speculative thought, distinct from the dialectical, is to open up the ‘gates’ of experiences that are ‘aporia’ and broken – the broken middle.

In which case, the fundamental relation between Rose and Hegel is their development and use of speculative thinking by which to bring forward the relation and non-relation between the certainty of a thing and its negation. It is this kind of movement in speculative thought that breaks Adorno’s dialectical methodology⁴⁸ because the stage of speculative reasoning is ‘knowledge of what is opposed in its very oneness, more precisely the knowledge that the opposites are in truth one’.⁴⁹ So, as with Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* Rose wants to show that ‘substantiality embraces the universal’ in thought and action whereby we know the infinite in finite experience and vice versa.⁵⁰ Outside the boundaries of dualistic thought, and in the endless movement of speculation,

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 60.

⁴⁷ Williams acknowledges the same criticism towards Osborne as I have addressed here. See Rowan D. Williams, ‘Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose’, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁸ J. Morra, review of *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) by Gillian Rose, in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 73, No. 4, (1995), p. 649.

⁴⁹ JM, p. 60.

⁵⁰ POS, § 17.

Rose and her reading of Hegel, have found ‘*within the philosophical tradition [...] the resources for the exploration of identity and lack of identity, independence and dependence, power and powerlessness*’ in social, political and religious thought.⁵¹

In this way, Rose holds onto the transforming capacity of the difficulty of actuality: ‘my difficulty is not addressed in any rejection of that tradition that would settle for only one side of my predicament: lack of identity, dependence, powerlessness, or any account of otherness which theorises solely exclusion and control’.⁵² It is in the fragmentation of reality and the inevitability of suffering that Rose and Hegel draw a person’s attention towards the breaking through of opposites rather than the abstractedness of separated opposites.⁵³ It is ‘this *speculative* account of experience’ which persists in acknowledging predicament and recognises the validity of contradiction by which Rose radically recasts the hidden meaning of Hegelian speculative philosophy. With this context in mind, I now explore Hegel’s legacy and his feud with his philosophical contemporaries, Fichte, and in various ways, Schelling, but more importantly, how this circle of philosophical exchange developed as a critical response to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁵⁴ This illumination of the Enlightenment period will help to clarify the importance Rose attaches to Hegel, and in turn, her dealings with contemporary thought and experience, particularly the concerns she raises in the next chapter with sociology and its reasoning for and within social theory.

⁵¹ JM, p. ix.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ This gives rise to earlier indications of the idea of a ‘broken middle’ in Hegel’s dialectic of ‘Lordship and Bondage’. See POS, § 188. I will return to a more detailed discussion of Hegel’s contribution here in the last chapter of this thesis, ‘salvation’.

⁵⁴ See for example, F. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); G. Di Giovanni ‘The First Twenty Years of Critique’ in P. Guyer (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 417-448; G. D. Giovanni & H. S. Harris (ed.), *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985). For Criticisms of Kant, see J. G. Fichte, *Science of Knowledge [Wissenschaftslehre]* (1794) trans. and eds. P. Heath & J. Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); F. W. J. von Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy* (1856-61) trans. & ed. A. Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, (1802) trans. W. Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), sect. A, POS, §§ 1-89, ‘Kant’ in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1833-6), trans. E. S. Haldane and F. Simpson (London: Routledge, 1968), Vol. III, pt III, sect. III.

5.3 *The Philosophical Setting*

The nature of Hegel's thought lies in the origin of his conception of the 'Absolute',⁵⁵ which is the comprehension of the infinite or whole in the experience of its antithesis. In this way, the Absolute for Hegel can be known through contradictory experience, which as Rose would suggest, intends in that case to avoid dualistic thinking. With this in mind, I introduce the philosophical setting of Hegel's time with a view to investigating the schism with his contemporaries, Fichte and Schelling, but more importantly the conflict they all shared against Kant and, in short, his theory of experience in the world.

The *Differenzschrift*, which is an early development of Hegel's originality of thought, in particular, his idea of the 'Absolute',⁵⁶ is a new theoretical schema with which to view the tradition of German Idealism or as it became known philosophically – Absolute Idealism.⁵⁷ This tradition in many ways highlights the issue I intend to address with Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling, which is an idealism that, in contrast to Kant for example, 'provides a genuine alternative to subject-object dualism'.⁵⁸ In this subject-object duality, which represents Kantian idealism, Hegel conversely attempts to achieve a comprehensive movement of harmony or reconciliation, 'to replace dichotomy with "identity"',⁵⁹ but unlike Kant, avoid the dualism which establishes this movement on the

⁵⁵ For Hegel, the German term, *absolut*, meaning 'absolute', is not to debate its existence, but more importantly, to determine what it actually is. Hegel's enquiry leads him to postulate that the reality of the absolute is validated on the basis of its manifestation for the individual and humanity as a whole. This term, as well as Hegel's system in general, is analogous to the legacy of Rose's broken middle. For an account of Hegel's 'absolute', see M. Inwood, *Hegel's Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 27-29.

⁵⁶ Hegel's *The Difference Between The Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy* is often referred to in most commentaries and discussions as the *Differenzschrift*. I intend to follow this reference with respect to further discussions and citations on this aspect of Hegel's work. For Hegel's discussion on the 'Absolute', see G. W. F. Hegel, *Differenzschrift*, trans. J. P. Surber (California: Ridgeview, 1978), pp. 36-71.

⁵⁷ The tradition of German Idealism or post-Kantian Idealism, which in philosophy became known as absolute idealism, belongs to the general perspective of how to view nature, man and society. See Hegel's own presentation of the history of German Idealism in G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, pp. 479-545. It is also worth remarking that the sources of absolute idealism do not just lie in philosophy but also in the flourishing of Romanticism in Germany at the time. See S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 332.

⁵⁸ See S. Sedgwick, 'Introduction: Idealism from Kant to Hegel' in *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

basis of the utility of rigid antitheses.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this sense of reconciliation within Absolute Idealism is set about with the identification of a single, ‘first principle’, which is certain of itself so that all other propositions built upon it are validated as truth claims according to this principle. In this way, philosophy comes forth as a ‘science’ that is *a priori* and certain.⁶¹

The reception of this kind of philosophy, which represents a scientific method of philosophical investigation, was predominantly in response to Kant’s thinking in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. The *Differenzschrift* for example, is an early indication of Hegel’s radically innovative viewpoint of the nature of unity with philosophy as a scientific construct fulfilling this form of unity.⁶² The Preface to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Mind* is a testament to his conviction of this principle.⁶³ Nevertheless, Kant never developed his theories from first principles. One may say that he did, however, work with the highest principle – the transcendental unity of apperception, that is, the derivation of the thinking self (self-consciousness) – but this was not the basic precept upon which all his other ideas were built. Kant’s system of thought, which corresponded to his conditions for a science, was based upon the understanding of

the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea. This idea is the concept provided by reason – of the form of the whole – in so far as the concept determines a priori not only the scope of its manifold content, but also the

⁶⁰ As Hegel suggests: the sole interest of Reason is to [...] suspend rigid antithesis’. See *Differenzschrift*, p. 90.

⁶¹ See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. and trans. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Avii-xxii/Bvii-xliv, A1-16/B1-30. See also, K. Ameriks, ‘The Practical Foundation of Philosophy in Kant, Fichte, and After’, in S. Sedgwick (ed.), *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, pp. 110 ff.

⁶² Hegel’s scientific, *Wissenschaftil*, system is based on his position that a system is an articulated, organic whole with science as an ‘organised, cohesive body of knowledge.’ For Hegel, ‘philosophy must be systematic and scientific [...]. A scientific system ensures that what one chooses to deal with and one’s claims about it express more than personal idiosyncrasies.’ In other words, a scientific system eliminates the aspect of personal sentiment. See M. Inwood, *Hegel’s Dictionary*, pp. 265-67. With this framework in place, Hegel, along with Fichte and Schelling, could meet the challenges faced by German Idealism. See S. Sedgwick, ‘Introduction: Idealism from Kant to Hegel,’ in *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, pp. 1ff.

⁶³ ‘The systematic development of truth in scientific form can alone be the true shape in which truth exists. To help bring philosophy nearer to the form of science [...] that is what I have set before me. The inner necessity that knowledge should be science lies in its very nature; and the adequate and sufficient explanation for this lies simply and solely in the systematic exposition of philosophy itself’. See G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949), p. 70.

positions which the parts occupy relatively to one another. The scientific concept of reason contains, therefore, the end and the form of that whole [...].⁶⁴

Post-Kantian thinkers, (the ‘Absolute Idealists’ i.e. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel), set about establishing a founding principle in order to prove, for example, the existence of a unified faculty of representation.⁶⁵ Kant never supported this project, believing that such unity could not be known: ‘*sensibility* and *understanding* [...] spring from a common, but to us unknown, root’.⁶⁶ Thus, he was less inclined to speculate on the matter. Rather, for Kant, the root of experience in the *Critique* emerges through various transcendental functions that support his investigations into the mode of our knowledge of the world in which we have experience. It is in particular emphasis on transcendental idealism, that is, the reduction of the objective world according to the individual’s perspective and projection and conversely, as we see here, Kant’s reservations about determining his theoretical, objective world, that he is met with several criticisms against the incoherence of what he ends up with as nothing more than a description of the existence of things in themselves, the charge of subject-object duality.⁶⁷ With the status of this subject-object relation, Kant’s notion of the subject as self-consciousness (Transcendental Unity of Apperception) emerges on grounds that are non-empirical and therefore under transcendental specifications. Fichte, nevertheless, responds by accepting Kant’s result but not the derivation of it, and Hegel critically responds to Fichte by developing his own position on the ‘absolute’.⁶⁸ With Hegel’s development, we begin to

⁶⁴ See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. and trans. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, A832-4/B860-2.

⁶⁵ See for example, K. L. Reinhold *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1786-87), trans. as *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*. For further details see S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 328 & 362.

⁶⁶ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A15/B29.

⁶⁷ See G. Schrader, ‘The thing in itself in Kantian philosophy’ in R. P. Wolff (ed.), *Kant: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 172-88; P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason”* (London: Methuen, 1966), pt IV.

⁶⁸ See *Differenzschrift*, 36-71. Fichte’s own philosophical system in the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) develops as a result of Kant’s Transcendental Deduction from his *Critique*. Yet there are a series of developments within the tradition that lead up to Hegel’s critical response to Fichte, and in order to provide a coherent account of why Hegel takes these issues against Fichte on the ‘absolute’ seriously, one needs to first and foremost to consider Kant and how he tackles the debate on Transcendental Deduction. In this case, to provide an accurate picture of Hegel’s own system of thought and indeed Rose’s own critical perspective on Fichte, it is crucial to toe the Kantian line on Transcendental Deduction, which, moreover, provides a theory for the ‘subject-object relation’ which Fichte uses to explore his own preoccupations with the ‘absolute’. See also, F. C. Beiser, ‘Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics’, in F. C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3-4 & 10-11.

see the continuity of his thinking in the life and work of Gillian Rose. But in order to assess this movement, I begin with Kant's work leading up to and on the Transcendental Deduction of the *Critique*.

5.4 *Kant's Transcendental Deduction*

5.4.1 The Possibility of Experience

For Kant, the relation between the subject and object presupposes a theory of *a priori* synthesis, which by virtue of a subject's activity entails a transcendental function⁶⁹ that establishes conceptual conditions of experience. Kant's use of the transcendental here is in order to launch into an investigation into the cognitive constitution of the subject to which objects must conform: by 'transcendental', Kant is not so much occupied with the knowledge of objects, but 'with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode [...] is to be possible *a priori*'.⁷⁰ With this standpoint, Kant intends to show how objectivity is not just based upon a transcendental role in his philosophy but is crucial for us to gain an understanding of how the world is and our relation to it in experience.

This for Kant begins with 'The Analytic' in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he attempts to ascertain the possibility of empirical knowledge in the world through the faculty of understanding that 'uncovers the conceptual components of the structure of experience'.⁷¹ The concepts Kant assumes are *a priori* are based upon his use of transcendental logic, a logic which attempts to illustrate the possibility of thoughts about objects. It is thus committed to the existence of *a priori* concepts and the *a priori* conceptual relation of a thought to an object.⁷² This representation however, functions at the cost of rejecting empiricism, with the upshot that we have a 'science of the

See also, A. White *Absolute Knowledge: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1983); P. Guyer, 'The Transcendental Deduction of the Categories', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, 123-160.

⁶⁹ By transcendental, according to Kant, it precedes experience *a priori* 'and makes knowledge of experience possible'. See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A11-12/B25.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, 115.

⁷² I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A56-7, B80-1.

knowledge' which is concerned with 'pure understanding and reason' in which objects are thought *a priori*.⁷³

The issue Kant needs to resolve, however, which amounts to the problem of how he is to relate the sensible and conceptual, the particular and universal in the structure of experience, is how fundamental concepts such as these which are necessary for experience are nevertheless, not even derived from experience. So, the issue with Kant is, how to relate experience and the application of *a priori* concepts to it. In other words, Kant needs to show how when we speak of experience as the relation of thought to object, we can do so on the presupposition of an *a priori* relation by which the object is originally constituted.⁷⁴ This answer comes in Kant's 'Transcendental Deduction', which represents his attempt to justify the representation of *a priori* concepts in and for experience or 'objects of experience'.⁷⁵ But Kant works with the principle of what he calls transcendental idealism, which presupposes the idea that objects of experience as such have a constitution that is independent of human sensibility. The transcendental deduction becomes more important than ever in attempting to establish the validity of Kant's *a priori* conceptual relations for experience that bridge thought and external reality, the sensible with the conceptual. At the same time, however, this idealism avoids the idea that the constitution of the objects of experience is somehow different from that of the cognitive needs of the subject. In such a case, one can justify the application of *a priori* concepts on the basis that the subject has needs that can be fulfilled cognitively if its objects of experience have a form determined by those concepts.⁷⁶ These concepts constitute Kant's idea of the 'categories'.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., A57, B81.

⁷⁴ See for example, S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 127.

⁷⁵ The *a priori* conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience'. See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A111.

⁷⁶ For a discussion of this, see S. Gardner, 128-31. These concepts which Kant associates with an object, in general, define what he calls the categories which enable us to have an experience. Kant says 'the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience.' See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B161. Furthermore, the relation of judgements to categories defines the notion of 'categories' further. The *categories* are nothing other than the very functions for judging [i.e. one empirical intuition determined by one of the logical functions for judgement (synthesis of the understanding) so that it can be brought forward into consciousness], 'insofar as the manifold of a given intuition is determined with regard to them,' (categories). See *ibid.*, B143

⁷⁷ For a more detailed discussion on the nature of the categories and Kant's Transcendental Deduction argument, see S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 135-65. See also, *ibid.*, A86-96/B120-26.

5.4.2 Kantian Transcendentalism and its Implications

The Transcendental Deduction attempts to show that a priori concepts function as transcendental conditions for experience: the deduction therefore illustrates, through its transcendental role, that *a priori* concepts are justified in their application to objects of experience on the basis 'that the objects to which they are applied are transcendently ideal'.⁷⁸ In order to do this, a transcendental function for conceptuality is necessary and Kant's idea of self-consciousness, the transcendental unity of apperception,⁷⁹ demands that there be objects which also have an a priori conceptual form.⁸⁰ So, the categories, legitimated by the Deduction, are rules that enable an a priori conceptual synthesis, which in turn allows for the possibility of transcendental apperception. In other words, the latter is only possible if there is a priori conceptual synthesis, and this is possible only if there are a priori concepts (categories).⁸¹ Thus, the Deduction concludes that all experience stands under transcendental conditions, and in this way, Kant uses it as a theory by which to show how the subject-object relation interrelates and is intelligible. But Kant's method of determination only leads to another level of enquiry. Given that the relation between the subject and object bears its 'fruits' according to the nature of the Deduction, the relation only seems possible at the transcendental level of enquiry. Even though Kant might have indicated the crucial significance of the transcendental deduction of the categories, there are nevertheless, a number of critical concerns that centre on the problem of how, for example, we can account for supernatural experience. Given that firstly, experience is intended to fall under the presupposition of the categories on strictly empirical grounds; and, secondly, that the categories are necessary in order to determine experience, if we were to take account of supernatural experience the categories would be

⁷⁸ S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 142-43.

⁷⁹ The 'Transcendental Unity of Apperception' refers to the determination of the identity of the subject itself (self-consciousness) on the transcendental level, that is, the conditions for possible experience *a priori*. See I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A11-12/B25. The subject in this way is part of the objective conditions of experience; the relation of the object to the subject fulfils the other aspect which needs also to be at the transcendental level in order to comply with Kant's requirements for experience. The 'subject' and 'object' are determined according to their relation to each other, that is, the object is determined according to its relation to the subject and vice versa. See *ibid.*, A107-113/B132-134; S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 145

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-2.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-1

inadequate to give a justified account because such experiences fall outside the precise role and function of the categories in the first place.⁸²

Nevertheless, these objections only account for a more serious contention concerning Kant's solution to the transcendental deduction, namely, his dualistic view of epistemology. The question which dissatisfied many post-Kantian philosophers is how can the realms of understanding at the *a priori* level interact with and determine the nature and reality of sensibility at the *a posteriori* level? There is the concern raised by the absolute idealists as to whether in fact it is possible for things in themselves to exist. Kant, in fact, argues that concepts isolated from sensible reality are meaningless, but this surely leans the argument in favour of the absolute idealist. If this is the case, one may find it difficult to accept Kant's transcendental idealism because we are now faced with knowing more than what we are supposed to know, that is to say, more than just the mere appearance of objects or things in this world. But in any case, the reality of another world based upon Kant's transcendental philosophy, which engages with the sensible world in order for us to have an experience, is dualistic. This for the absolute idealists, in particular Hegel, raises a more fundamental issue that Kant fails to abide by the rules of his own system. That is to say, he merely presents sensibility and understanding, particularity and universality as something distinguishable without actually acquiring an '*a priori* derivation of the distinction [...]'.⁸³ This duality, for Kant, presents a gulf, for example, between nature and freedom, theoretical and practical reason, and the particular and universal. One then is unable to explain at this stage how to possibly relate these two distinct, informative realms in order to acquire a clear epistemic world-view that overcomes Kant's on-going dualistic world-view of epistemology.⁸⁴

⁸² See S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 163-65. See also P. Guyer, 'Kant's Tactics in the Transcendental Deduction' in J. N. Mohanty and R. W. Shaham (eds.), *Essays on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 164-172; P. Guyer and A. Wood, 'Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*' in I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 62-63.

⁸³ See Sebastian Gardner, p. 333.

⁸⁴ Critical discussions against Kantian dualism are something that features predominantly through the work of his early critics. For example, Solomon Maimon, a Kantian critic, explores Kant's problem with the understanding-sensibility issue with the same degree of precaution as with Descartes' contention over the 'mind-body' dualism. See S. Maimon, *Versuch über die Transcendentalphilosophie, Gesammelte Werke*, ed. V. Verra (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965) II, pp. 62-65, 182-83, 362-64. See also F. C. Beiser, 'Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics' in F. C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, p. 11, 24.

In which case, having reached the stage in which we begin to see the controversy with Kant, attention now turns to explore the critical discussions by the post-Kantian idealists, beginning with Fichte's system of philosophy in the *Wissenschaftslehre*⁸⁵ and Hegel's system through the *Differenzschrift*. When I begin to assess the problems with Fichte's system of thought, through a critical evaluation by Hegel and Schelling, I will, in order to elaborate and clearly arrange Hegel's thoughts, refer to his own critical accounts of Kant.

5.5 *Fichte's Response to Kant's Transcendental Deduction*

5.5.1 Fichtean Experience

Fichte's thought is part and parcel of the tradition of post-Kantian idealism. Though he accepts the consequences of Kant's investigations on the transcendental deduction, Fichte nevertheless attempts to establish a critical philosophy on the source rather than the outcome of Kant's enquiry. He draws upon the work of two pre-Kantian philosophers, Leibniz and Spinoza, as well as reflections upon post-Kantian philosophers, Solomon Maimon and Karl Reinholds.⁸⁶ Fundamentally, Fichte intends to comprehend the nature of experience within the continuum of space-time, and the laws within it that govern the reality of objects. More important however, is his enquiry into the universal accountability of the self and its capacity to act in relation to the external world. His opening remarks in the 'First Introduction' of his 'new presentation' validates this conviction:

Everyone will perceive a remarkable difference between the various ways in which his consciousness is immediately determined, and one could call these

⁸⁵ The *Wissenschaftslehre* translates as the 'Doctrine of Science' or 'Theory of Scientific Knowledge' and categorises the foundation of Fichte's entire system of philosophy. The first instalments of his new system emerges under the title, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* trans. *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre*, in 1794. Fichte revised his system in 1797, 'An Attempt at a New Presentation of the *Wissenschaftslehre*', which Peter Heath and John Lachs edited and translated as *Fichte: Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre) with First and Second Introductions* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970). References will be made according to 'section' so that any text may be consulted.

⁸⁶ Fichte's discussions attend to a number of critical reflections on the work of Leibniz and Spinoza. See J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', in P. Heath and J. Lachs (eds. and trans.), *Fichte: Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre), with First and Second Introductions*, §§ I, 513-515, 101, 120-122. For Maimon and Reinold's influence on Fichte, see *ibid.*, §§ 479-484, 489-490. See also S. Gardner, pp. 328-330.

immediate determinations of consciousness “representations” [...]. In short, we could say that some of our representations are accompanied by a feeling of freedom and others are accompanied by a feeling of necessity.⁸⁷

The relation of the feeling of necessity to the modifications of an individual’s consciousness or presentations is what Fichte calls experience, and it is the responsibility of philosophy to ‘display the basis or foundation of all experience’.⁸⁸ Fichte takes on this responsibility in his philosophical system so that his enquiry into the principle of knowledge is to understand how the self is orientated between the empirical and transcendental realms in order that it embodies the capacity simultaneously to abstract and act. Hence, this principle is formulated in a context of ‘subject’ and ‘object’ with all knowledge being nothing more or less than giving attention to the reality of the knower and the known.⁸⁹ The foundation of this insight by Fichte is connected with his interpretation that Kant’s *Critique* is based upon idealism rather than dogmatism.⁹⁰ Fichte’s discussion of their differences is interconnected with his position on the ‘subject-object’ relation.⁹¹

5.5.2 Fichte’s Idealism and the Development of ‘Intellectual Intuition’

Fichte’s interpretation of Kant as an Idealist suggests that the central contention he has with the dogmatist is its fundamental inability to find a connection between the nature of being, i.e. subsistence of an object, and a representation of that object. Hence, the subject ‘I’ is subordinated to the object of experience. In this way, ideas of freedom and nature are derived outside of self-consciousness or intelligence, which Fichte and Hegel call the realm of ‘things-in-themselves’.

⁸⁷ J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. D. Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), §§ 422-423.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, §§ 424 ff.

⁸⁹ Baiser makes a similar distinction in his essay when he says that all knowledge according to Fichte’s principle of ‘subject-object identity’ is the identity of the knower and the known. See F. C. Beiser, ‘Introduction: Hegel and the problem of metaphysics’ in F. C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, p. 12.

⁹⁰ See S. Sedgwick, ‘Idealism from Kant to Hegel’, in *The Reception of Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, 2-3; G. Zöller, ‘From Critique to Metacritique: Fichte’s Transformation of Kant’s Transcendental Idealism’, *ibid.*, pp. 129ff.

⁹¹ See J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. D. Breazeale, 1994, §§ I, 430-433.

This problem with dogmatism therefore, illustrates the virtues of idealism, that is, any object ought to be subordinated to the subject 'I' so that the all-sufficiency of the 'I' entails that the agent is free and responsible for itself. So, with idealism being self-determinative, the object of idealism is this 'I-in-itself' expression,⁹² which is raised above all experience. In other words, it 'explains the determinations of consciousness by referring them to the acting of the intellect', which in turn, is active and absolute: 'Idealism considers the intellect to be a kind of *doing* and absolutely nothing more'.⁹³ The 'I' that chooses to act on the basis that it carries the mark of its own self-existence, that is, as a self's non-conceptual awareness of its faculty of self-consciousness, Fichte characterises as *intellectual intuition*.⁹⁴ This intuition is the self, 'I', that 'reverts *into itself*', and via this act of self-observation the 'I' comes to be aware of the fact that the spontaneity of self-consciousness is the condition of all consciousness.⁹⁵ Thus, the 'I' here becomes the unrestricted, absolute ground for determination of all things – in positing itself it presupposes a basis of unmitigated knowledge of itself.

Interestingly, the subject, 'I', under the conceptual notion of intellectual intuition parallels with Fichte's earlier account of the 'I' in the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794-5) instalments as infinite or absolute: '*that whose being or essence consists simply in the fact that it posits itself as existing, is the ['I'] as absolute subject*'.⁹⁶ What is interesting with Fichte's use of intellectual intuition and this deduction here in which the 'I' begins

⁹² Ibid., 428.

⁹³ Ibid., 440.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 459, 463. This notion of intellectual intuition is 'the immediate consciousness that I act, and of what I do when I act. It is because of this that it is possible for me to know something because I do it.' Fichte defines this process as indeterminable according to the power of conceptual analysis because each individual needs to affirm the necessary reality of intellectual intuition in order that individual self-consciousness emerges for experience. It seems unfortunate that Fichte uses this notion since 'intuition' is somewhat 'misplaced' with the process as a kind of 'act'. In retrospect, this concept is never used by Fichte in the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794-5) He uses it in the later introductions of 1797 as a result of the influence of the German Philosopher, Friedrich Schelling, who develops the notion, 'intellectual intuition'. See *ibid.*, xxv-xxvi. See also J. L. Esposito, *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature* (London: Associated University Press, 1977), pp. 38-9, 104-5. For a critical account, see *ibid.*, pp. 160-65.

⁹⁵ J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. D. Breazeale, § I, 459. It should also be noted at this stage, that the spontaneity of self-consciousness, contrast to Kant, refers to Fichte and Hegel's idealism founded on the spontaneity rather than the receptivity of the subject. See S. Gardner, p. 335; S. Sedgwick, p. 16.

⁹⁶ J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', in P. Heath and J. Lachs (eds. and trans.), *Fichte: Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre) with First and Second Introductions*, 1970, § I, 97. See also §§ 91-101. For the sake of consistency, I have continued to refer to the subject as 'I' instead of Heath and Lachs' translation, 'self'.

with an immediate, non-empirical act of self-positing to represent the faculty of self-consciousness, is that it corresponds to Kant's reference to it as the unity of pure apperception. But for Kant, intellectual intuition which human beings do not possess, is such that a subject does not depend upon sensibility; out of its intuiting activity, it produces objects as they are in themselves.⁹⁷ Fichte as much as Hegel, as we know, rejects this kind of dogmatism, but Fichte's use of intellectual intuition in this case is dubious for if he asserts the inaccessibility of things-in-themselves, how is it possible that this intuition can be justified for acquiring knowledge in the first place? In other words then, it seems counterproductive that an unconditional principle can be said to establish a system of conditions with which to identify features of experience.

5.5.3 Determining the 'I' with the 'not-I'

So the issue with Fichte's defence of idealism and his interpretation of Kant's transcendental deduction is that there is nothing outside or independent of the 'I' or self's act of self-positing. For Kant, self-consciousness simply refers all representations to a single subject without having any determinate concepts and therefore knowledge, whereas for Fichte, the 'I's' positing of itself has complete knowledge of itself, (intellectual intuition).⁹⁸ Yet the problem that concerns Fichte is that the deduction for experience cannot be completed within this act of self-positing or intuition alone. The concern that Hegel raises and which I discuss in due course is that Fichte's intellectual intuition is not entirely self-sufficient after all. But the latter, nevertheless, intends to proceed from the act of self-positing, which is indeterminate and empty, to a deduction of objects of consciousness for experience. In this way, he introduces a second but conditioned principle, the 'not-I', so that in order for the absolute 'I' to gain determination or to establish a basis for action, it needs something other than itself – a limiting, finite, 'not-I'.⁹⁹ Fichte's second principle, in other words, is 'that "not-I is not equal to I'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B68/B71/A252. See also S. Gardner, pp. 69-70.

⁹⁸ See S. Gardner, p. 334.

⁹⁹ See J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, §§ I, 126-131, 251, 276.

¹⁰⁰ S. Sedgwick, 'Idealism from Kant to Hegel', p. 6.

Consequently, the absolute 'I' is characterised by its own capacity for self-limitation and self-determination.¹⁰¹ But the result of this, contrary to Fichte, in terms of acquiring experience is only possible when the intellectual intuition is brought into relation to something other than itself; that is, in the absence of the 'not-I', the absolute 'I' is empty and indeterminate. In which case, we cannot proceed from intellectual intuition to objects of consciousness or experience without its determination depending upon something else.¹⁰²

5.5.4 Fichte's Dilemma

What I have attempted to show with Fichte that is contrary to Kant is that even though the absolute 'I' is not entirely self-sufficient for experience (for reasons I explore further in due course with Hegel), the concept of action (only possible through the intellectual intuition of the self-active 'I')¹⁰³ unites the sensible and intelligible worlds by grounding objects of consciousness in the absolute 'I' of self-consciousness. In this way, Fichte starts by opposing the dualism by overcoming it so that, in contrast to Kant, nature and freedom are united and 'subject' and 'object' are united in the absolute 'I'. Conversely however, when Fichte goes about his business by attempting to demonstrate that empirical consciousness is posited and grounded in self-consciousness, his acts of determination and therefore opposition are nevertheless outside of the 'I' of intellectual intuition itself so that thought and reality, self-consciousness and empirical consciousness are in fact divided. This places Fichte back into the same dilemma as with Kant in which thought and reality are irretrievably divided. Therefore, the ultimate conditions of knowing would never be possible in experience;¹⁰⁴ rather the 'not-I' is created and exists as a dependent on and the primary activity of, the absolute 'I'.

¹⁰¹ J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', in P. Heath and J. Lachs (eds. and trans.), §§ I, 250-2.

¹⁰² Therefore, 'the "I" of the intellectual intuition which was initially presented as absolutely self-sufficient and responsible for completely determining [...] the existence of all [experiences], turns out on Fichte's own estimation to at best determine only what [experiences] *ought* to be produced or posited'. See S. Sedgwick, 'Idealism from Kant to Hegel', p. 7.

¹⁰³ J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, trans and ed. D. Breazeale, § 467

¹⁰⁴ Fichte, in his discussion of Spinoza's principle of unity for human cognition, implies that the absolute self is more of a heuristic precept than a precept which actually exists. See J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', § I, 101.

In this case, Fichte has attempted to re-orientate the problem of transcendental deduction away from the dualistic problem of Kantian epistemology towards a more, though not entirely, non-dualistic framework. Nevertheless, the problem of duality that conceives separate worlds of reality still lingers in Fichte's system of thought. I now intend therefore, to bring into focus the reason for my accounts of Kant and Fichte on the transcendental deduction and its implications together with the depth and insight of Hegel's thought, in order to illustrate the genesis of Rose's exploration of her own social, religious and political preoccupations.

5.6 *From Schelling to Hegel: An Introduction to Hegel's Thought*

If we are to embark on Hegel's systematic deduction of knowledge and experience, and therefore assert his conception of the 'Absolute', which we identified prior to discussions on Kant, we need to consider two things. Firstly, Hegel develops the genesis of his own system through a critical evaluation of Fichte's system in the *Differenzschrift*. Secondly, in order to embark upon this route we need to provide a preliminary to Hegel's thinking on the absolute through a brief introduction of his philosophical predecessor, F. W. J. von Schelling. The latter's system of knowledge is a consolidation of Fichte's originality of the notion of self-consciousness ('self' or 'I') from the *Wissenschaftslehre*,¹⁰⁵ and in the legacy of absolute idealism, Schelling is recognised as a 'transitional figure in the development from Fichte to Hegel'.¹⁰⁶

At the end of the last section, we identified Fichte's belief that the absolute 'I' can never in itself be known in conscious experience, and that instead, it functions more as an heuristic device. But then on this basis, Fichte asserts that the unity of subject-object identity is based on the unitary consciousness of the 'self' or 'I'. Yet what justification determines this principle inasmuch as it is unable from within itself to relate to and prove the reality of the external world? How then, as Schelling puts it, 'is the entire system of knowledge (e.g. the objective with all its determinations, history etc.) posited through the self?' '[...] We know that the self is originally mere activity; but how do we come to

¹⁰⁵ F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), trans. P. Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ See S. Gardner, p. 335.

posit it as blind activity?’¹⁰⁷ Fichte’s system implies that the nature of ‘positing’ does not in any way account for the objective world. Schelling’s objective then is to overcome in the order of self-consciousness, the polarity between transcendental idealism and real activity (realism) by a thesis of ‘ideal-realism’.¹⁰⁸ Any activity of the self under the necessary (but unconscious) act of self-positing simultaneously expresses the self as both equally active and limited. In other words, the self becomes object and subject, finite and infinite.¹⁰⁹

Hegel was inclined to accept Schelling’s idealism, but less inclined to embrace his methodology of how we are to *know* the absolute of subject and object. Hegel was more inclined through his use of Reason¹¹⁰ to know the absolute through the process of self-discovery by which it exposes and scrutinises its claims of identity as much as its errors within those claims. In this case, for Hegel, the notion of the ‘absolute’ is a metaphysical manifestation of his system of unity or identity, which in contrast to Schelling’s system, is not just about identity – the likeness between subject and object – but in conjunction with it is the difference between subject and object, which Schelling’s thought fails to consider.¹¹¹

In which case, to understand the basic premise of the *Differenzschrift* is to conceive this coming to understand the absolute for Hegel, which he addresses with some concern with Schelling but more by way of his serious contentions with Fichte’s system of thought. Part of this concern, which I explore in due course, is the way in which Hegel develops his idea of reason (through his critical evaluations of Fichte), as a structure that overcomes and unifies opposites though sustaining the ‘content’ of identity and

¹⁰⁷ F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), pp. 34-35. Schelling refers to the self as ‘blind activity’ simply because according to Fichte, the self is a regulative mechanism and therefore whether it exists or not is unimportant. See also *ibid.*, pp. 36-41.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Self-consciousness (the self) is a conflict of absolutely opposed activities. The one that originally reaches out into infinity we shall call the *real, objective, limitable* activity; the other, the tendency to intuit oneself in that infinity, is called the *ideal, subjective, illimitable* activity’. See *ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ The term, *Vernunft*, ‘reason’, is used by Hegel in two distinct ways: dialectically and speculatively. Briefly, the dialectic attempts to expose the contradictions implicit in abstractions and the ‘tendency of sharply defined opposites [which] veer into each other’. The speculative process brings forward a positive movement from the collapse of abstractions. This will become clearer in proceeding chapters. See M. Inwood, *Hegel’s Dictionary*, pp. 242-244.

¹¹¹ *Differenzschrift*, p. 33.

difference.¹¹² In this way, Hegel believed the fundamental antidote for Fichte's problem was to realise that thought involves the unifying capacity of reason, and should not therefore have exhausted the nature of thought by the determining activity of reflection.

5.7 Hegel on Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*

Hegel's critical account of Fichte's thought takes up the longest section of the *Differenzschrift*, and the fundamental principle at the heart of his system, according to Hegel, is the identity of the absolute 'I' or I=I.¹¹³ The principle of the identity of I=I is according to Hegel, 'pure thinking' of itself accessible which, if we recall, characterises Fichte's response to intellectual intuition, (the determination of the identity of self-consciousness with itself), and constitutes the development of his system.¹¹⁴ For Hegel, the problem arises as I mention earlier, with the development of his system of knowledge and experience: according to Fichte, 'I determine my intuition for myself by thinking of something posited in opposition to it'.¹¹⁵ Fichte's concept of thought then is firstly noted as an expression of activity, where 'the "I" is posited as *thinking*, and to that extent as *acting*'. Yet, secondly, as a determination of being (here Fichte asserts the restriction of being in order for thinking to be possible), it is also an expression of limitation and passivity. Hence, the concept of thinking is at variance with itself.¹¹⁶

So, according to Hegel, Fichte is correct that, in the activity of self-consciousness (intellectual intuition) he asserts a unity or identity between subject and object and, going against the dogmatist, experience as such is grounded in the positing activity of the 'I'. But where Fichte goes wrong, says Hegel, is that by representing the first principle, the

¹¹² Surber makes a similar point when he discusses the possibility of a rational reconciliation of opposites with Hegel's style of thought and writing in the *Differenzschrift*. See J. P. Surber, 'Hegel's Turning-Point: The "Differenzschritt"', pp. xi-xii. See also Hegel's account in 'The Need for Philosophy', whereby he discusses the correlation between Reason and the Absolute in relation to culture. Ibid., pp. 10-14. Hence, in the *Differenzschrift*, Hegel summarises the task of Reason: 'the sole interest of Reason is to suspend [...] rigid antithesis'. See *ibid.*, p. 90. See also, S. Sedgwick, 'Introduction: Idealism from Kant to Hegel', p. 15.

¹¹³ *Differenzschrift*, p. 36.

¹¹⁴ See J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', §§ I, 494-95, 241-43.

¹¹⁵ J. G. Fichte, *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, § I, 492. Surber produces a similar argument on Hegel's concern of Fichte's problem of conceptual thought, yet he uses this to emphasise the importance of the unifying capacity of Reason. See J. P. Surber, 'Hegel's Critique of Fichte: A matter of Interpretation', in *Differenzschrift*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

¹¹⁶ See J. G. Fichte, 'Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge (1794)', § I, 140.

I=I, as indeterminate and in need of determination and completion by further acts of positing, these further acts of opposition as such are brought forward outside the first act, second act and so on. In which case, Fichte fails to recognise that opposition and therefore determination are already given in the first act or principle of the 'I' itself. In this way, the divide between thought and reality, thinking and acting is overcome because according to Fichte's 'logic of reflection', with the act of intellectual intuition A=A, for example, expresses 'pure unity' *without* opposition. For Hegel on the other hand, the expression A=A represents both unity or identity and opposition.¹¹⁷ Thus, if Fichte's way of thinking is always a positing of an object of thought that is opposed to and outside of the 'I', then the development of the system will never be able to overcome his claims against the dogmatist because Fichte relies upon the 'logic of reflection' rather than Hegel's 'speculative logic', which in view of the latter, is to interpret the 'I' not just as pure identity or unity but also with difference or opposition. 'He cannot understand the "I" of intellectual intuition to express an original identity of subject and object'.¹¹⁸

Thus, the encountering of the 'I = I' in a state of opposition suggests that, even though Fichte began with the highest principle of identity, of bringing together unity out of opposition, all that has occurred is a development of infinite chains of oppositions and determinations. Through this act of absolute self-activity, 'the objective totality of empirical knowledge is posited as equal to pure self-consciousness. Thereby, the latter is completely sublated¹¹⁹ (gives them life by assuming them into the living unification of its own activity¹²⁰) as concept or as an opposed moment, and thus the former is also sublated. Empirical consciousness therefore cannot be viewed as proceeding out of pure consciousness'.¹²¹ Hegel pursues this problem throughout his discussion of the Fichtean system, and varies the consequences of the alienating of the highest principle of identity as a result not just of its 'pure identity' but also its deleted 'condition of opposition'. In this way, Hegel employs his speculative logic against the 'logic of reflection' with Fichte

¹¹⁷ *Differenzschrift*, p. 37.

¹¹⁸ S. Sedgwick, p. 9.

¹¹⁹ For Hegel, the term, *Aufheben*, 'to sublimate' refers to several items in an account that either cancel or balance each other out. For example, the sublation of the 'whole' – where the 'whole' and its opposites survive as moments, is usually the truth of the items sublated. See M. Inwood, *Hegel's Dictionary*, pp. 283-85.

¹²⁰ *Differenzschrift*, p. xxxiii.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

within a wider context that covers social issues such as morality, law, aesthetics and a reality of Nature.¹²²

In this way, Fichte fails from a speculative viewpoint to achieve a satisfactory alternative to dogmatism. Like with Kant, he attempts to provide a system of experience and knowledge that presupposes the divide between thought and reality, the universal and particular. This in retrospect shows Fichte's 'I' of intellectual intuition, (as with Kant's 'I think'), to be fundamentally *dependent* form of consciousness, rather than as it claims to be – self-sufficient and indeterminate. Accordingly, the *Differenzschrift* expresses a move of perceiving the idea of the 'absolute' not just from a 'logic of reflection' but equally a 'logic of speculation' whereby it discovers a sense of identity only when there is opposition and difference.¹²³ Thus, the Absolute for Hegel is unity or identity that includes difference, that is, the Absolute as 'the identity of identity and non-identity',¹²⁴ the certainty of certainty and its negation.

5.8 *The Speculative Logic of the 'Absolute'*

The way to the absolute unfolds as a process of knowing, a scientific construct for philosophy that journeys towards the power of unity. Hegel's fundamental insight here is that Reason read speculatively is the most appropriate medium by means of which to come to terms with the Absolute. The extent of Reason, through philosophy, is required according to the extent of diremption: 'If the power of unification disappears from the life of men, and if the contrasts have lost their living relationship and reciprocity and have achieved independence, the need for philosophy arises [...]'.¹²⁵ The nature of Reason is its activity of bringing unity out of separation:

[...] In the given diremption, it is the necessary attempt to sublimate the opposition of the solidified subjectivity and objectivity, and to conceive the "being-as-having-become" of the intellectual and real world as a becoming and their being

¹²² See *ibid.*, pp. 59-71. For a summary of Hegel's criticisms of Fichte and whether they are entirely justified, see *ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxvii. See also, A. Sarlemijn, *Hegel's Dialectic* (Holland: D. Reidel, 1975), pp. 58-61.

¹²³ *Differenzschrift*, pp. 38ff.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12. See also G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, pp. 37-8.

qua products as a producing. In the infinite activity of becoming and producing, Reason has united that which was separated.¹²⁶

Further, Hegel asserts that these self-reproductions of Reason which appear as philosophies, are contingent, and this contingency must be conceived on the basis on which the Absolute posits itself as an objective totality – the objectivity viewed ‘as a progress in time’.¹²⁷ Reason’s activity is therefore seen as overcoming fixed propositions that are in opposition, and bringing them into the totality of a higher unity. A systematic mode of unity therefore provides a unity of propositions each of which stand dualistically to the whole. As a result their significance and meaning is conferred and viewed as true according to its relation to the Absolute, which the total system of philosophy expresses. For Hegel, the system is a living whole, where thought and being are not only brought to life by the activity of Reason, through philosophy, but are also unified by it.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show how the metaphysics of Schelling and Hegel both perceived the ‘absolute’ as the whole, of which all objects are simply parts of that whole. There is nothing supernatural about their metaphysical preoccupation, but a ‘Spinozistic conclusion’ of the absolute whereby the whole is an expression of the universe, containing everything in it, with nothing outside the universe upon which the universe itself depends.¹²⁸ Yet, both diverted quite dramatically from Spinoza by their assertion of the absolute as a living, organic organism, functioning as a self-determined system which the metaphysical purpose of the whole, embodied.¹²⁹ Hegel, as I mention, partly accepted

¹²⁶ Ibid. See also POS, §§ 17-22. Hegel talks about the importance of ‘substance’ becoming ‘subject’ in order to not only express the ‘True’, but for substantiality to embrace the universal.

¹²⁷ *Differenzschrift*, 12. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel expresses the ‘whole’ as nothing other than ‘the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the end is it what it truly is’. This seems to equate to Hegel’s identification of the Absolute as a progression in time, in the *Differenzschrift*. See POS, § 20

¹²⁸ B. D. Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. A. Boyle (Heron Books, 1934), Part 1, def. 3.

¹²⁹ Beiser in his essay ‘Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics’ shows that giving the notion of the ‘Absolute’ organic properties, is based on scientific discoveries of the new sciences: ‘the recent discoveries in electricity, magnetism, and biology made it necessary to conceive of matter in more dynamic terms’. These scientific realities unfortunately were not available to Spinoza, whose mechanistic conception of the ‘absolute’ was therefore based on the sciences of his time. See F. C. Beiser, p. 6. See Hegel’s refutation of Spinoza’s ‘frozen’ universe in G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, 287-290; Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumausgabe in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. H. Glockner (Stuttgart:

Schelling's conclusion of the Absolute with its 'living' independent essence and existence, but had difficulties in coming to terms with his formulation of the absolute rather than his original conception of it.¹³⁰ As I have mentioned, Schelling describes the idea of the 'absolute' as a higher thing, an 'eternal unknown' which can neither be subject nor object, nor both at once, never becoming an object yet impressing its identity upon all free actions.¹³¹ His notion of 'intellectual intuition' implies that our knowledge of the absolute is immediate and unconditioned. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel describes this absolute as 'the night in which, as the saying goes, all cows are black',¹³² cognition that is naive, and an Absolute burdened by thought that is empty and lifeless.

Hegel adopts a similar method of critique against Fichte; if we are to see the absolute only in its infinite modality without any 'conditions' for finite operations, then we seem to exclude the realm of finite sensibility from it.¹³³ Consequently, the absolute becomes dependent entirely upon its properties, mainly, its essence, which in turn is conceivable only in terms of what it is not in relation to the finite realm. Hegel, in the *Phenomenology*, therefore, wishes to postulate a different perspective on the absolute as the 'whole' of substance and its modes – 'substantiality embraces the universal',¹³⁴ – so that unity then is based upon the working relationship of both the 'infinite' and the 'finite'. The absolute, for Hegel, encompasses both finitude and appearance, and the distinctions that occur within it, i.e. the 'whole', exist according to the nature of self-knowledge.¹³⁵ Even though concepts of understanding, for example, might contradict one another, their resolution can only be established as parts of a wider whole, a more inclusive standpoint. In other words, when a finite concept is in contradiction i.e. (the

Frommann, 1968), p. 19, 376. Cited by R. B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4, 261. See also Sarlemijn's discussion of Hegel's confrontations with Spinoza's universe, and his consequent methodological development of self-movement in A. Sarlemijn, *Hegel's Dialectic*, pp. 121-24.

¹³⁰ For a discussion of the issues relating to Schelling's philosophical problematic, see R. B. Pippin, 'Schelling and the Jena Writings', in *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness*, pp. 60-65.

¹³¹ Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), pp. 208-10.

¹³² POS, § 16.

¹³³ Hegel's argument here is one that is metaphysical against Fichte. There are non-metaphysical accounts of Fichte, which flatly oppose the traditional Hegelian reading. See R. B. Pippin, 'Fichte's Alleged Subjective, Psychological, One-Sided Idealism' in S. Sedgwick (ed.), *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, pp. 147-170; D. Breazeale, 'The Spirit of the *Wissenschaftslehre*', *ibid.*, pp. 171-198.

¹³⁴ POS, § 17.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, § 47.

definition of a concept is dependent on what it is not, yet wishes to describe the absolute because it has an all self-sufficient, independent meaning), the arrival of such a contradiction can only find its solution by including the whole of two concepts – its negation and its claim of independence.¹³⁶

What Hegel attempts to provide particularly with the *Phenomenology* is, firstly, the necessity of a strictly immanent metaphysics based upon experience alone, and secondly, an attempt to provide nothing less than a transcendental deduction of absolute knowledge.¹³⁷ The contrast with this agenda between Hegel and Kant, is that for Hegel, the impersonal, universal subject, Spirit, takes precedence over the gamut of personal, individualised consciousnesses, so that in fact, Spirit or the Absolute as Spirit replaces Kant's 'I' of apperception, namely, self-consciousness. No longer is there a head-on collision between subjectivity and objectivity (Kant), but Spirit that unifies substance and subject, the ideal and the real, thought and life – all through 'a process of absolution (releasement) and resolution (reintegration)'.¹³⁸ The Absolute then, for Hegel, in contrast to Kant, is an unconditioned system of concepts manifested in actuality within the world of experience:

What Hegel may be seen to be offering with this conception [the Absolute] is a set of terms on which everything within the transcendental perspective – which in Kant is accorded only objectivity-relative-to-the-subject (a worthless status, in Hegel's view) – can be raised to unrelativised, absolute objectivity.¹³⁹

The challenge that Kant faces is his problem of discovering a common ground whereby there can be in some sense, a 'cohabitation' and 'collaboration' between the formal structures of knowledge (transcendental) and the material determinations which

¹³⁶ See Hegel's discussion of the 'universal' and 'particular' in G. W. F. Hegel, *The Jena System, 1804-5: Logic and Metaphysics*, eds. and trans. J. W. Burbidge and G. D. Giovanni (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), pp. 79-80.

¹³⁷ See F. C. Beiser, 'Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics', pp. 19-20. See also, C. Taylor, 'The Opening Arguments for The *Phenomenology*' in A. MacIntyre (ed.), *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), p. 150.

¹³⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Theologian of the Spirit*, ed. P. C. Hodgson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), p. 92.

¹³⁹ S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, 336-7. For further discussions of Hegel's criticisms of Kant see R. B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, 35-41; G. Bird, 'Hegel's Account of Kant's Epistemology in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*', and W. H. Walsh, 'Kant as Seen by Hegel' in Stephen Priest (ed.), *Hegel's Critique of Kant* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 65-76, 205-220.

we gain from appearances of the finite world (empirical). Though Kant's view of the 'I' of apperception was original and influential in its expression of self-consciousness as necessarily active for the acquisition of knowledge, the 'I' of apperception nevertheless went beyond Kantian epistemology.¹⁴⁰ It paved the way for a more elaborate, though not entirely non-dualistic account for Fichte, where the self-activity of the 'I' could deduce the content of thought. Nevertheless, as Schelling and Hegel came to realise, this perception of self-consciousness was, as with Kant's theory, plagued by the same internal problems of how knowledge of the self, as a product of positing activity, could come to grips with the finite world. Fichte seems to embody similar internal conflicts about the nature and implications of self-consciousness. It was only when Schelling outlined the self-determination of Nature¹⁴¹ as well as consciousness, that the solution to the philosophical problematic of identity of subject and object lay in their equal subordination to a third term, the Absolute.

The development of the subject-object relation is based then on the progressive, self-development process of the Absolute itself which falls under Hegel's 'speculative logic'. That is to say, the process whereby the subject-object relation must pass through the various forms of opposition in which we can then assert a sense of identity or unity as an expression of the Absolute. The Absolute is the termination of thought, not the beginning of thought (Fichte and Schelling) – it is as itself, the 'infinite, self-differentiating process, the identity which could exist only if its internal differentiation was preserved, rather than the vanishing of all difference in the stable identity of an ultimate intuition'.¹⁴² The internal differentiation refers to the journey with which the subject-object relation must pass through the various forms of opposition:

If we are to think the subject-object relation as an essential whole, then we, as subjects, need to grasp the distinction of subject and object in terms *other* than those in which it *presents* itself to us; we need to grasp it as not "just distinct aspects of my subjective viewpoint" but rather as "objectively posited". In other

¹⁴⁰ Hegel acknowledges indirectly that his own speculative theory of identity is owed to the nature of the argument of Kant's Transcendental Deduction. See *Differenzschrift*, pp. 79-81. See also R. B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, pp. 6-12.

¹⁴¹ See Schelling's 'Philosophy of Nature' in *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, trans. A. Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 114-133.

¹⁴² *Differenzschrift*, p. xxiii.

words, we need to be able to think the subject-object relation itself in terms which are not merely subjective.¹⁴³

It is within this dynamic of Hegel's thought, the nature of the Absolute and the importance of Reason, that he wishes to take the opportunity 'to get rid of certain habits of thought which impede philosophical cognition'.¹⁴⁴ Like Hegel, Gillian Rose continues his legacy of re-modelling within her system of thought and logic the habits of dualistic thought that plague modernity and the post-modern world. With Hegel's speculative thinking developed in full, I explore in the next chapter its continuation with Rose and her recasting of Hegelian speculative philosophy within social theory, and then how this reassessment supports the development of her philosophical idea – the broken middle.

¹⁴³ S. Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 339.

¹⁴⁴ POS, §16.

Chapter VI: The Genesis of the Broken Middle

Here is the rose, dance here.

What lies between reason as self-conscious spirit and reason as present actuality, what separates the former from the latter and prevents it from finding satisfaction in it, is the fetter of some abstraction or other which has not been liberated into [the form of] the concept. To recognise reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to delight in the present – this rational insight is the *reconciliation* with actuality which philosophy grants to those who have received the inner call to *comprehend*...to stand with their subjective freedom not in a particular and contingent situation, but in what has being and for itself.¹

6.1 *Introduction*

The aim of this chapter is to explore the meaning, logic and reasoning behind Hegel's thinking from the previous chapter in relation to Rose's identification of the ambiguous development of social theory and sociological reasoning. Through an exploration of these ambiguities and dichotomies, the intention is to investigate how she retrieves 'Hegelian speculative experience for social theory'.² The purpose of this inquiry is to begin exploring the genesis of the broken middle through a speculative understanding of social relations – the relation, and separation of one individual to another. The idea of a social relation is based upon a contradiction that aims to establish both a connection and a separation of individuals. In other words, social relations are presented as individual self-consciousness that is self-contradictory. Both the union and separation of individuals in social relations are not simply two realities; they are two aspects of one Reality which are already implicitly united. Recognising these two aspects in the one Reality, Hegel's

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 21-2. 'In Greek, *Rhodos* means either "Rhodes" or "rose", and in Latin, *salta* means either "jump" or "dance". The pun suggests to Hegel that to meet the challenge of comprehending the rationality of the actual is also to find a way of rejoicing in the present'. See *ibid.*, p. 391.

² HCS, p. 1.

philosophical system makes the implicit explicit. What this implies, and the previous chapter has alluded to this point, is that Hegel's philosophy rises like the Greek rises to divinity, but unlike the Greek and in the case of Simone Weil, Hegel can unite the 'knowledge of God' with the 'wisdom of the world', and indeed, with the world itself.³ His system does not flee from but stays with the modern world, where such a world is not destroyed by it, but rather preserved, expanded and reinstated.

This is, perhaps, a particularly vague summary of Hegel's philosophical system, but it does address the main point that he did expect the material and immaterial worlds to be viewed as a congruent whole, and that the individual is expected, within that whole, to take on the responsibility of its contradictory experiences and thoughts. As the Hegelian philosopher, Emile Fackenheim puts it: 'The Hegelian philosophy seeks to grasp a Reality which *lives in* the particulars, by means of a thought which *passes through* and *encompasses* them. Moreover, it is not a theory *beside* practical life but rather an activity which moves through both theory and practice, being in a sense neither and in a sense both'.⁴ Therefore, the journey for Rose, and her reading of Hegel, is to show how social theory and sociology have misunderstood his system of thought by failing to recognise the actuality of his system,⁵ and more importantly, the affinity between this world and the world beyond. This journey begins exclusively with an earlier work, *Hegel Contra Sociology*. Precisely, this text attempts to illustrate how a variety of sociological enterprises and social theorising is based upon philosophical foundations in neo-Kantianism and 'neo-Kantian metacritiques'. On the basis of Kant's theory of knowledge, these critiques critically reflect upon the relation between the epistemic subject engaged in critique and the object criticised.⁶ Rose's argument is that these social theories are philosophically inadequate, and that Hegel's thought, correctly understood, is the only way out of these philosophically inadequate forms of neo-Kantianism. What she

³ Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵ Karl Marx's critique of Hegel, for example, is based on a Fichtean reading of his system which fails to appropriately grasp Hegel's ideas about actuality and spirit. Instead, Marx's own conception of practical materialism constructs abstract dichotomies concerning social relations that are unable to conceive of any form of mediation because these dichotomies split theory from practice. For further details, see HCS, pp. 214ff. See also, Peter Osborne, 'Hegelian Phenomenology and the Critique of Reason and Society', *Radical Philosophy* 32 (1982), 8-15, (p. 8).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9. See also, G. Kortian, *Metacritique*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 29-30.

understands as a philosophical inadequacy is the practical impotence in sociological reasoning.⁷ In other words, the philosophical failings in social theory and sociological reasoning are to do with their inability to generate theories other than as distinct from, and externally related to, consciousness. In short, there is no adequate link between abstract thought and practical living in social relations. Nevertheless, to address what Rose understands as the abstractedness of social relations, the discussion has to initially recap current assessments of Hegel's thought and metaphysics in order, first, to recognise Rose's continuation of his feud with Kant and Fichte, and second, expand upon Rose's assessment of how Hegel's phenomenology is a more useful tool in which to overcome these impractical social ideas. Part of understanding her assessment will include a correlation with and a re-examination of Weil's understanding of social relations discussed earlier in chapter III.

6.2 *A Summary of the Hegelian Enterprise*

The previous chapter attempted to illustrate the nature of Hegel's thinking – that the identity of self-consciousness, and therefore social relations, are not just 'a unity in abstraction from opposition', but equally a unity and an opposition in itself. This was the outcome of several evaluations between Hegel and his philosophical contemporaries, Kant, Fichte and Schelling. Contrary to his colleagues, this way of thinking for Hegel works against the presupposition of the duality between thought and reality. Thus, he says, the possibility of harmony with the apparent idealisms of Fichte and Kant cannot be realised because of each of their dependencies upon the 'logic of reflection', that is, their assuming a unity without opposition within the first principle, 'I=I'. In which case, both philosophies in Fichte and Kant assume a separation between theory and practice.

This is precisely what Hegel wants to avoid. His use of speculative logic in conjunction with the 'logic of reflection' is to assert the absolute in such a way that it *includes* rather than excludes difference and opposition between subject and object. In the same manner, Rose continues to build and develop Hegel's speculative logic through social theory, assessing the way in which sociology has reconfigured the same dilemma

⁷ See HCS, chapter 1.

we see with Fichte and Kant, namely, the division between theory and practice. Contemporary social theory has simply adopted dualistic adaptations of what she calls 'neo-Kantian paradigms' to justify their degrees of social theorising and practice.⁸ It is this dualism, the 'unknowability' of Kant's 'unconditioned' or 'infinite' that suggests we have no access to ourselves as subjects of experience. It implies, therefore, that social and political ideas of knowledge and action 'remain unknown and unknowable'. This is Rose's deduction of Hegel's concern with Kant's transcendental method. For Rose, the indeterminacy of Kantian transcendentalism means that we are unable to conceive the real meaning behind Hegel's social and political imports since the irrationality of the relation between limited knowledge of the finite and an 'insatiable yearning for the unknowable' means that a rational relation to social and political conditions of our lives is almost impossible. 'The limitation of justified knowledge of the finite prevents us from recognising, criticising, and hence from changing the social and political relations which determine us'.⁹ If the infinite is a concept of ourselves and our possibilities then we are powerless, passive and empty in our capacity to change, reconfigure and re-evaluate our lives and experiences in society.

It is this understanding of social relations that Rose contrasts with the development of sociological reasoning and theory. Sociologists attempt to interpret Hegel's social and political ideas without emphasising his system. In other words, sociologists such as Georg Simmel and Karl Mannheim take the social import of Hegel's 'objective spirit' – his common spirit of a social group, embodied in its customs, laws and institutions¹⁰ – and apply it to other 'spheres of social life'.¹¹ In doing so, they exclude Hegel's system of the absolute which, the 'structure of recognition or misrecognition in a society' in the context here of social relations, represents the lack of identity and identity between self-consciousness and its objects. More precisely, it is the relation between relation and non-relation of individual self-consciousness in society that misrecognition, as a form of recognition, fails to acknowledge. This is what is fresh about

⁸ See *ibid.*

⁹ See *Differenzschrift*, p. 66; HCS, p. 45.

¹⁰ See M. Inwood, *Hegel's Dictionary*, pp. 274-6.

¹¹ See G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. T. Bottomore & D. Frisby (London: Routledge, 1978); K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1966); J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. J. J. Shapiro (London: Heinemann, 1972). See also, HCS, pp. 39-42.

Rose's interpretation of Hegel. In contrast to sociological critiques of Hegelian thought that do away with the notion of the absolute whilst retaining his social import, Rose insists that 'Hegel's philosophy has no social import if the absolute is banished or suppressed, if the absolute cannot be thought'.¹² One cannot in other words, adopt Hegel's 'objective spirit' as a world-view of a society without integrating it with his philosophical system of speculative logic.

This is what Hegel's critics and the outcome of sociological reasoning fail to recognise. Hence, Rose's criticism that non-Marxist and Marxist sociology mystifies rather than clarifies Hegel's thought leads her to interpret Hegel on social relations as not justifying the *status quo*, but rather speculatively commending the unity of theory and practice as well, for example, as the unity of Kant and Fichte's practical and theoretical philosophy. Hegel's social and political theories on the onset of discussions to come do not attempt, as Rose finds with sociology and its reasoning, to overcome the dualistic 'gap' in its thinking. In this way, she is attempting to elaborate upon the idea that one cannot legitimate the use of the principles of theory, such as Kant's use of reason, without reference to experience so that what emerges is a perpetual, on-going reconfiguration of the experience of contradiction and the contradiction of experience.

So, Rose takes the extreme with Hegel by attempting endlessly to re-conceive various forms of recognition in our living of reality. This radical interpretation is illustrated with an investigation of her use of Hegel's critical philosophy of Fichte and Kant (indirectly) in order to address the issues she has with sociology. But prior to this, we need to explore Hegel's speculative philosophy, his system, independently but also in relation to Rose in order to see how she revives Hegel's idea of the absolute, for example, within his methodology so that we recognise more clearly the dichotomies and divisions in Fichte and Kant's philosophy. More importantly, the investigation addresses this also in order to recognise the genesis of the broken middle and how Rose applies it within her use of contradiction in order to illustrate the difficulty of actuality or reality in its various guises.

¹² HCS, pp. 41-2.

6.3 *The Absolute as Real*

6.3.1 Freedom in the *Logic*

Through his thought, Hegel intends to unify Kantian and Fichtean dichotomies such as between theoretical and practical reason under the logic of speculation. This principle of unification is achieved by a phenomenology, that is, it does not allow the concept of 'method' to be discussed until it can appear in a sequence of experiences. The *Logic* by Hegel attempts to rediscover the unity related to the opposition between a finite consciousness and its objects that has been overcome. In which case, it presupposes 'that the opposition between a finite consciousness and its objects has been overcome'¹³ so that the opposition between concept and intuition in Kantian and Fichtean philosophy¹⁴ is the basis of the opposition between theoretical and practical reason and the abstract, one-sided domination of Fichte's practical reason.

The *Logic*, in short, attempts to show how we might understand these dominating and suppressing elements without in turn attempting to dominate them through the system Hegel explores. The exploration of this system represents an investigation of speculative thought, which culminates in the representation of the 'absolute idea':

The Absolute [or Speculative] Idea is, in the first place, the unity of the theoretical and practical idea, and thus at the same time the unity of the idea of life with the idea of cognition. In cognition we had the idea in a biased, one-sided shape. The process of cognition has issued in the overthrow of this bias and the restoration of that unity, which as unity, and in its immediacy, is in the first instance the Idea of Life. The unity and truth of these two is the Absolute Idea, which is both in itself and for itself.¹⁵

This introduction that follows the genesis of Hegel's speculative ideology from the previous chapter forms the foundation of his thinking in his *Philosophy of Right*. With reference to the 'Preface', he implies that its propositions presuppose a fully developed account of speculative knowledge according to his *Science of Logic*.¹⁶ The nature of

¹³ HCS, p. 47.

¹⁴ See Chapter VI.

¹⁵ Ibid., § 236.

¹⁶ Rose remarks that the expositions of the *Philosophy of Right* presuppose "the nature of speculative knowledge as set out in the (Greater) Logic". Yet, this exposition, according to Rose, has been represented to justify propositions of identity within the state so that it is read 'as a justification of the *status quo*'. See HCS, p. 79. I will enlarge on this misinterpretation because it interconnects with Rose's

action in the *Logic* functions as a principle in the *Philosophy of Right*. It is founded on the realm of 'spirit', in which the essence of this 'spirit' is freedom. The kind of freedom Hegel has in mind is a certain kind of action in which everything that the individual is, is determined through the world of that individual, and not by anything external to it.¹⁷ Even though we act according to our own objective nature, this does not imply the withdrawal from 'the other' of ourselves, but actively relating to something other than oneself so that it becomes incorporated as one's own action. In other words, 'only by making resolutions can the human being enter actuality: "Whoever aspires to great things", says Goethe, "must be able to limit himself"'.¹⁸ Hence, 'the universal which has being in and for itself is in general what is called the *rational*'. It expresses freedom absolutely as 'being with oneself in another'. That is to say, the individual, or 'I', is with itself in its limitations in 'the other'. Therefore, the actuality of freedom is brought about when 'the human being [who] is rational *in himself* must work through the process of self-production both by going out of himself and by educating himself inwardly, in order that he may become rational *for himself*'.¹⁹ In other words, freedom or ethical life, in which *The Philosophy of Right*, is founded is actual only in contradictory experience whereby the relation between subject (particular) and substance (universal) appear on both sides of the divide; that is, appear to be dependent and independent from one another.²⁰ Only when subject and substance are divided from each other, therefore, 'and known in and through that division, is freedom or ethical life known and realised'.²¹

intentions to expand upon the notion of 'the real to the rational' in relation to the *Philosophy of Right*. For references of this speculative orientation with Hegel, see also Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 10. The speculative method used in *The Philosophy of Right* is discussed in *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, 13-56 & 25-59. Also, see *Hegel's Logic*, §§ 238-242.

¹⁷ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 23. See also references to Hegel's abstract notion of being with oneself, *ibid.*, § 23R, 401. The letter 'R' refers to various remarks made on a specific section.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, § 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, § 10.

²⁰ This level of dependence and independence in the self-relation of subject and substance, which then forms the relation between subject and substance, corresponds to Hegel's 'master-slave' section in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Yet, excluding this section, Hegel attempts to present absolute ethical life within the context of illustrating recognition and misrecognition (or Appropriation) in order to expose the contradiction of property and work relations. This will be discussed shortly. See POS, §§ 32-39, 77-87, 202-9, 217-225, 359-89, 630-71; see also, HCS, pp. 149-84.

²¹ CAE, p. 170.

6.3.2 The Bourgeois Form of Social Relations

To summarise, ethical life is based upon the actuality of freedom that appears in contradictory experience. This, if one recalls from chapter III, amounts to the nature of human liberty for Simone Weil. Such an experience as this represents ‘spirit’ which emerges through, and is divided by, action. Action that supports the kind of freedom Hegel has in mind, divides spirit into subject and substance, that is, the particular, (the independence of each person) and universal (mutual dependence of all recognised in universal law) respectively. Hegel conceives ethical life as the contradiction of both subject and substance, and therefore, the mutual misrecognition of subject and substance, that is, the identity (relation) and lack of identity (non-relation) in and as both subject and substance. Living out one’s ethical life in this way, illustrate real social relations. The opposite of this, on the other hand, represents the Kantian dichotomy of thought in which the state or social relations are conceived dualistically. This is represented by bourgeois forms of social relations that depict ethical life relatively, that is, upon the lack of identity or relations.

Individuals in this way become ‘competing, isolated moral individuals who can only relate externally to one another’. As a result they subject themselves to a real lack of identity’.²² The nature of bourgeois society then presupposes a level of formal abstraction that does away with the side of relation of real social relations only to then represent its freedom as independence, non-relation, in Hegel’s speculative logic. They recognise themselves, through the possession of private property, for example, as being for self over being for another.²³ In this way, through bourgeois social relations, the universal (non-relation) dominates over the particular (relation), and freedom is visible as non-

²² HCS, p. 56. This corresponds with Hegel’s discourse on the ‘master/slave’ relation, which in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an experience of the contradiction of social relations. When both master and slave are visible, then both aspects of this experience – relation and non-relation as real social relations – are present. See POS, §§ 178-196. In bourgeois social relations, only the master is visible whilst the slave has vanished. Here, as Nigel Tubbs remarks, ‘relation loses its presence and visibility in the world’. See CAE, p. 161.

²³ HCS, pp. 72-74. In spite of this possession of property, Rose reads Hegel to show that this is in fact a contradiction not between the free and unfree as two separate individuals, but of the free individual in and for himself with his or her private or particular possession. The person here is now in self-relation, ‘and its domination is now over itself. That which guarantees its freedom is that which also contradicts it’. See CAE, p. 168.

relation whilst non-freedom as relation has vanished.²⁴ In this case, the universal becomes victorious and dominates over the particular. But this is its deception: it fails to recognise that by the victory of universality, the 'free' person of bourgeois society now appears to be in contradiction in and for itself. In which case, the person in self-relation means that its domination is now over itself which, says Hegel, is self-contradictory. This self-contradictory situation is illustrated, as mentioned above, by bourgeois private property, 'because an individual's particular possession can only be guaranteed by the whole society, the universal'.²⁵ In which case, bourgeois social and property relations in fact both oppose the freedom they seek to authenticate. As Rose argues:

Private property [for example] is a contradiction, because an individual's private or particular possession can only be guaranteed by the whole society, the universal. The universal is the community. This guarantee makes possession into property. Property means the right to exclude others, and the exclusion of other individuals (particular) is made possible by the communal will (universal). But, if everyone has an equal right to possess, to exclude others, then no one can have any guaranteed possession, or, anyone's possession belongs equally to everyone else.²⁶

In short, bourgeois social relations isolate individuals as abstract and unreal, which is something that appears through Weil's understanding of social relations. The investigation will explore this point at a later stage in this chapter. In the meantime, under the duality of Kantian and Fichtean philosophy, these relations imply that the state is represented by the 'predominance of concept over intuition'. Its idea here of universality or unity is not an existing reality, but a concept imposed on reality – the concept of pure practical reason, which considers nature or intuition. Under Fichte's philosophical system, for example, the 'ideal' relation between individual and society 'is achieved by suppressing all aspects of the [not-I], of social life and of the individual, which do not conform to the ideal'.²⁷ This unity, says Hegel, has no real social relations, and Rose validates this through her reading of Hegel in terms of the way art and religion in bourgeois society misrepresent absolute ethical life. In order to understand how art and

²⁴ For a more detailed discussion of this, see *ibid.*, pp.165-70.

²⁵ HCS, p. 73. See also, *ibid.*, pp. 168-70.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Differenzschrift*, pp. 90-2; HCS, p. 58.

religion misrepresent absolute ethical life, the investigation now explores these misrepresentations in further detail.

6.4 *Misrepresentation of Absolute Ethical Life*

Art, according to Rose, misrepresents absolute ethical life more than religion because the former, under bourgeois society, displaces and distorts intuition so that it represents individuals isolated under the formal recognition of the concept (art is unable to unify concept and intuition). The latter, religion conversely, projects its vision into a realm beyond the state, that is, beyond real social relations. Thus, religion, like art, in bourgeois society is a form of misrecognition, that is, they mis-recognise recognition which emphasises the identity as well as the lack of identity/difference that is present. Therefore, recognition misrepresented in the case of religion, occurs whereby its world is considered distinct from the world of real social and political relation – heaven. Its unity is removed from the real world.

In this way, religion reconciles concept and intuition in another world, which we have observed similarly with Simone Weil, but the promise of a real transformation ‘prevents its actual development’ because it is not of this world but some other. This is the opposition Hegel recognised between church and state so that as distinct social institutions, they become ‘fanatical’.²⁸ Each, as Weil also recognised, seeks to impose itself on the other. The Church represents the power of intuition over and above the concept (of unity over relation), bringing forward the rule of heaven on earth with no reference to real social and political relations. The State, however, represents the opposite, i.e. the power of the concept over and above the intuition, and thus, intends to conceive the law without reference to individual conscience and beliefs.²⁹ Therefore, the issue then for Rose and her reading of Hegel, is that given these restrictions and misrecognitions, how is it that absolute ethical life can appear in society without itself appearing abstract and unreal? The question remains unanswered, and this is precisely Hegel’s objective with his speculative thinking, which develops as I introduce earlier,

²⁸ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1, pp. 296-8; HCS, pp. 75-77.

²⁹ HCS, pp. 72-5, 77. This I will give further discussion in relation to Rose’s ‘broken middle’ in chapter VII.

through his *Philosophy of Right*. In contrast to the separation of religion and state, Hegel intends to establish the way in which they secure one another in principle since their condition of misrecognition or misrepresentation, in fact, refers to real recognition.³⁰

Real recognition then of the state, for Hegel, is the ethical life fully developed, and where he defines ethical life as the Idea or absolute ethical life, the state in turn is illustrated as the actuality of the ethical Idea,³¹ the 'absolute end' because it is *rational* (being the 'unity and interpenetration of universality and individuality')³² and thus, self-sufficient. In this way, Hegel develops absolute ethical life which does not suppress, nor reproduce, real relations, lack of identity.³³ If our social life is in concord with our individuality, the demands of ethical life do not limit our freedom but actualise it. Hegel's treatise in which case, is designed

[...] *To comprehend and portray the state as an inherently rational entity; as a philosophical composition it must distance itself as far as possible from the obligation to construct a state as it ought to be [...], but rather at showing how the state, as the ethical universe, should be recognised.*³⁴

In short, Hegel intends not to 'construct a state as it ought to be' which his most famous quote, 'what is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational' validates, even though he has often been misunderstood as suggesting the contrary.³⁵ It does not imply that everything is as it ought to be, or more specifically, that the existing political order is always rational. Through Rose's reading of Hegel, Hegel's intention is not to reform, but to comprehend the reality of its *present* condition, that is, the contradictions of bourgeois society. In this way, Hegel only intended, says Rose, to illustrate the reality of ethical life and 'not the task of achieving it'.³⁶ In other words, he wants to show that the actual and the rational must be sought 'in the illusion of the temporal, of history', whereby illusion refers to relations or difference'.³⁷ The question then, 'how does this illusion assert itself

³⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

³¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, § 257.

³² Ibid., §§ 257-258.

³³ See G. W. F. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life & First Philosophy of Spirit*, trans. H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), pp. 144-56.

³⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 21.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁶ HCS, p. 51.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

in history?' Its assertion is based upon the reality of illusory being or positing which we find in Kant and Fichte. Rose argues that the above proposition, (the actual is rational) has been used to assert Hegel's critique against Kant and Fichte and their use of illusions or relations of bourgeois private property as the rational principle of the whole society. According to Rose, Hegel wishes to draw attention to the illusions (relations or differences) of bourgeois society, working against the approach that takes the illusion as rational, as the absolute principle of the whole.³⁸ What follows on from identifying the misrepresentations of absolute ethical life is an appreciation of Hegel's speculative identity and non-identity, established in the craft of his works as the inversion of substance into subject; that is to say, the inversion of ethical life into modern legal status and morality, which occurs when the state is separated from civil society'.³⁹

6.5 *Hegel's Speculative Experience*

With Hegel's intention to invert ethical life into modern legal status and morality, Rose attempts to address his social and political thinking speculatively by trying to turn the weakness of modern society identified in this discussion into its strength. Institutions designed to contain the inequity and inequality of bourgeois property relations are presented in the attempt to acknowledge injustice, but not to recreate it by imposing an equally abstract ideal, a new form of injustice.⁴⁰

The issues we have discussed in relation to Hegel's bourgeois society are associated with the divisions between the concept and intuition in Kantian transcendental philosophy, which if we recall, Fichte adopted in his philosophical system. It is this divide between thought and reality as such that Rose postulates that sociological thought and reasoning represent Kantian dualism and Fichtean positing.⁴¹ This explains why she

³⁸ Ibid. For the particular individual to take bourgeois society or social relations as the rational principle which unifies the whole, is says Rose, to merely reproduce 'the contradictions and inequity' within it. See *ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁹ JM, p. 61.

⁴⁰ HCS, p. 80.

⁴¹ See Rose's discussion of how Fichte's act of positing, which we discussed in the previous chapter, appears not just as a supreme representation of bourgeois thought is adapted by sociology in its reasoning and thinking. See *ibid.*, pp. 205-214. See also, G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. R. Livingstone (London: Merlin, 1971), pp. 118-120

dramatically believes Kantian law is primarily responsible for the breakdown of philosophy and the rise of social theory.⁴² If we recall, Hegel identified Kant and Fichte and their philosophies through the 'logic of reflection' so that intellectual intuition for Fichte, for example, is understood as the opposition or relation between the concept and intuition. In this way, 'A' sees itself directly in what is opposed to it, 'B', where the seeing is one-sided.⁴³ 'A' sees itself in 'B' but 'B' does not see itself in 'A'. Hence, 'A' sees a distorted, dualistic view of itself which is a reflection of individual domination. It is recognising 'A' in 'B' and 'B' in 'A' that Rose reads Hegel's proposition, the actual is rational, speculatively. In doing so, she radically interprets the *Philosophy of Right*, particularly his political writings such as his essay on natural law, as a phenomenology: 'the illusions and experiences of moral and political consciousness are presented in an order designed to show how consciousness may progress through them to comprehension of the determination of the ethical life'.⁴⁴

Overall then, Rose intends to revive Hegelian speculative experience as a dictum of the absolute, the whole, in order to show that it can only be known through contradictory experience. In other words, for Kant and Fichte to assert concrete universals within institutions that reconcile contradictions means that, governed by the 'domination of the discursive concept' that assert these fixed universal laws, one fails to recognise the lifelessness of them, and therefore, our inability to relate to them in our experiences. One is unable to know oneself because 'the transcendental unity of apperception' (Kant), and the First Principle 'I am I' (Fichte), which defines ourselves as subjects of experience, is unknowable. In which case, 'the social, political and historical determinants of all knowledge and all action remain unknown and unknowable'.⁴⁵ It is the restriction which Kant places on finite knowledge in relation to his philosophy of consciousness that concerns Hegel. Kant's consciousness, says Rose, 'can only be criticized if the infinite is knowable',⁴⁶ and this is precisely her intention: to assert that the infinite is present, but as of yet unknown, neither to pre-judge it as methodologically

⁴² G. Rose, 'Jewish Ethics and the Crisis of Philosophy', in E. L. Fackenheim & R. Jospe (eds.), *Jewish Philosophy and the Academy* (London: Associated University Presses, 1996), 168. See also N. Tubbs, 'What is Love's Work?', p. 39. See also, JM, pp. 26-27.

⁴³ HCS, p. 71.

⁴⁴ Ibid., o. 50. For further discussion see, *ibid.*, pp. 50ff.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

unknowable nor to 'shoot it from the pistol'⁴⁷ with certainty, but only to consider a distinction between the finite and infinite. There is no pre-judgement because 'no autonomous justification is given of a new object, and no statement is made before it is achieved'.⁴⁸ Put another way, 'to seek to know before we know is as absurd as the wise resolution of Scholasticus, not to venture into the water until he had learned to swim'.⁴⁹

In which case, this 'whole' can only find expression, as Rose sees it, by the process of contradictory experiences of consciousness that will filter the (as yet) unknown infinite into territories whereby it will become realised. This develops into Hegel's 'spirit' – the structure of recognition and misrecognition which I allude to already, as well as speculative thought and experience, in as much as the genesis of Rose's broken middle. Yet, to develop this genesis even further I turn to a brief summary of Hegel's speculative thought.

6.6 *Speculative Logic in the Broken Middle*

'*The speculative experience of the lack of identity*'⁵⁰ is Rose's reading of Hegel's speculative exposition between religion and the state, which he recognises as separated within bourgeois society. Hegel, if we recall, wishes to sustain the contradiction (relation and non-relation) between subject and object. In view of what has been discussed so far, the problem with Kantian and Fichtean philosophy in relation to Hegel's speculative logic is more to do with dualistic thinking where genuine knowledge is grounded on the transcendental subject.

Speculative ideology, or precisely, a speculative proposition, therefore, embraces the impossibility of Kantian justifications of consciousness in which concept and intuition are recognised as irrevocably divided. When a proposition is read speculatively, it affirms the identity of a proposition between the subject and predicate, in addition to, affirming a *lack* of identity between subject and predicate, i.e. the relation and non-

⁴⁷ This expression is used by Hegel to assert that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* lays the 'foundation' of 'coming-to-be', that is, of genuine knowledge which begins straight away 'like a shot from a pistol', with absolute knowledge. See POS, § 27. See also, *ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Hegel's Logic*, § 10. Also cited by Rose though in a different context in, HCS, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁰ HCS, p. 49.

relation of a proposition. For Rose, the non-relation cannot be pre-judged; 'it cannot be justified in a transcendental sense', but does become a necessary part with which to 'see' or identify a proposition:⁵¹ 'the speculative stage, or stage of positive reason, apprehends the unity of terms (propositions) in their opposition – the affirmative, which is involved in their disintegration and in their transition'.⁵² The movement involved in their disintegration and transition leads Rose to assert that the subject is not fixed, with 'abstract, external nor contingent accidentals', but uncertain, and problematic with the possibility of acquiring a sense of meaning from the process of contradictory experiences.

This meaning forms the basis in which the broken middle is born as an idea of thought, a philosophical, impersonal idea that gradually merges into Rose's autobiography, *Love's Work*, as a 'personal idea'. This personal idea of the broken middle will be an investigation as to whether she lived according to the unity of the finite and infinite she perceived through Hegel? Further, it will assess whether her mind could only conceive the movement of self-realisation of the 'absolute' as a way of life, or if the journey of her soul also reflected the deep ambiguities and dichotomies of the work of contradiction. At this stage, we have reached the heart of Hegel's speculative logic. Now it is important to further the dualistic nature of Kant and Fichte's thinking in order to elucidate conclusively the true import of Hegel's proposition in the 'Preface' of *The Philosophy of Right*, as well as its implications for moving further into Rose's conception of and experience in the broken middle.

6.7 *Rose's Assessment of Hegelian Consciousness*

One has already come to understand that Kant's transcendental conception of the absolute implies a division, for example, of social and political imports that debase or suppress them as unknowable. In this way, an abstract statement that attempts to determine absolute ethical life 'does not exist in the modern world'. Hegel intends, as Rose perceives through the *Philosophy of Right*, to 'not provide any abstract statement of it [absolute ethical life] apart from the presentations of the contradictions which imply

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁵² *Hegel's Logic*, § 82.

it'.⁵³ The implication of this is that Hegel resists the temptation of transforming ethical life into an abstract ideal, a 'ought'. Rose, therefore, addresses Hegel's attention to ethical life in the *Philosophy of Right*, not from the perception of it as a goal, task or, a 'ought', but to emphasise that ethical life is *present*. Hegel's volition is to speculatively account for the unity of theory and practice in the *Philosophy of Right*, instead of reading it as a justification of the *status quo*.⁵⁴

Hegel also asserts the unity between religion and state in order to determine the 'one concept of freedom in religion and state. This one concept is the highest concept that human beings have, and it is made real by them'.⁵⁵ However, this assertion is intended to be viewed from the speculative perspective, that is, to be experienced as a contradiction, which becomes apparent when Rose foresees that such a proposition would be perceived as tautologically uninformative and equally unintelligible. Hegel asserts that the 'propositional form must be read as a "speculative proposition"' in the sense that it 'embraces the impossibility of Kantian justification',⁵⁶ that is, the justification of the determination and application of an abstract statement into an abstract ideal. The sort of question that would reflect a misunderstanding of Hegel's motivation is, 'how can religion, our subjective disposition regarding the absolute, become the foundation of objective ethical life?'⁵⁷ This basic appeal against aporetic dualism, social theory attempts to overcome and reconcile. Rose, on the other hand, does not wish to infiltrate any 'principle of reconciliation'. She intends to show that in fact our natural or ordinary consciousness, which considers this speculative reading, is not natural at all, but an illusion. Natural consciousness takes itself to be immediate and natural, yet it 'presupposes an overall economic and political organisation which may not be immediately intelligible'.⁵⁸

Through Rose's reading of Hegel, one is suggesting that a person's natural consciousness is, in fact, defined according to abstract, philosophical consciousness, and

⁵³ HCS, p. 51.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 1, 452. See also HCS, p. 48.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ N. Tubbs, 'Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose' p. 48. I am not suggesting in any way that Tubbs falls into this pattern of misunderstanding. I am simply using his example as the sort of question that would be raised as a misconception of Hegel's thought.

⁵⁸ HCS, p. 50.

this becomes apparent when social theory attempts to negate aporetic dualism with abstract, sociological precepts. What manifests itself is a diremption of consciousness, a distinction between natural and philosophical consciousness. 'The absolute and natural consciousness is misrepresented, abstracted from real social relations. Natural or ordinary consciousness defines and understands the absolute as otherworldly, in opposition to social and political relations.'⁵⁹ Kant and Fichte's 'subjective idealism' (Hegel), 'fuels' the illusion of division between these two distinct forms of consciousness. For Rose, the unconditioned duality of morality/legality, particular/universal, concept/intuition with both Kant and Fichte lead her to believe that they

abstract from all specific, historical aspects of social life, and thus reaffirm an abstracted, "moral" individual who only represents one part of it. Relative ethical life [Hegel demonstrates this as an epistemological lack of identity or *relation* as a real social relation] is the life of isolated individuals who exist in a relation to each other which excludes any real unity.⁶⁰

For Rose and Hegel, the absolute ethical life then excludes any abstract and negative social relations associated with the unconditioned diremptions of Kant and Fichte.⁶¹ Crucially, we cannot know ethical life, 'apart from the presentations of the contradictions which imply it.' Since contradiction of experience is speculative, this suggests that with the illusion of an abstract, philosophical consciousness it tends for example, not to present the lack of identity or relation of bourgeois society. 'The lack of identity, or relations, is not presented as the experience of a natural consciousness which gradually comes to appropriate and recognise a political relation and unity which is different from that of relative ethical life'.⁶² Recognition implies this unity that includes a relation or lack of identity, whereas misrecognition refers to, 'but does not pre-judge, real recognition'.⁶³ For Rose, recognition as a form of misrecognition arises as a result of contradiction whereby 'in bourgeois society, absolute ethical life is misconceived as the primacy of the concept of pure practical reason, of the predominance of concept over

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 56. See therefore, Rose's account of Hegel's critique of natural law, in which natural law attempts to assert itself as a rational principle which unifies the whole, 'when [in fact] it merely reproduces the contradictions and inequity of bourgeois private property'. See *ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

intuition'.⁶⁴ In which case, this apparent unity has 'no *presence* as the communal achievement of existing individuals, and can only be represented as *beyond* real existence.'⁶⁵

The intention for Rose (and Hegel) with this experience of dualism is to ensure, therefore, that philosophical and natural consciousness become the same, that the subject becomes subjective substance. On this basis then, if natural consciousness 'defines and understands the absolute as otherworldly, in opposition to social and political relations', (Hegel's representation of the Church) then the absolute and natural consciousness are misrepresented, and therefore, abstracted from real social relations. The result is that natural consciousness definition of the absolute contradicts its experience; its definition of itself excludes its real social relations.⁶⁶ In other words, abstract philosophical consciousness determines itself according to its experiences as natural consciousness – the two forms becoming indistinguishable. It is in the speculative totality of both relation and non-relation that consciousness is then able to achieve an absolute understanding of itself.⁶⁷ This absolute, however, moves into a form of non-abstract 'knowing' with the experience of a continual reality of work and struggle that sustains the absolute as subjective substance. Hence, we have arrived into a world with a broken middle. But before the discussion leads into a clear outline of the nature this term, it is worth comparing Rose's understanding of social relations, through friendship, with Simone Weil's that, if one recalls, was discussed earlier in relation to her development of human liberty.

6.8 *Weil and Rose: the Significance of Social Relations*

Rose, like Weil, clearly displays deep reservations toward metaphysical thinking that is exclusively abstract. As chapter I suggested, Rose attempts to integrate themes and perspectives often separated out in modern thought. While her contributions here have been explored, an important reason for bringing her into a contrast with Weil is to reflect

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶⁷ The nature and movement of consciousness in speculative experience, in as much as the distinctions of consciousness as natural and philosophical, I explore further in the next chapter.

upon this growing concern with Weil's struggle to fully integrate key themes associated with her metaphysical ideas, and how Rose may appear to illuminate her struggle.

To reiterate the point: Rose is uneasy with pure, abstract, intellectualism. Her uneasiness becomes apparent in her later assessments of postmodern thought which, generally speaking, attempts to purge itself of 'metaphysics' and reason, and resolves to abandon the assumption that one must seek out absolute or ultimate foundations for reality and for human thought.⁶⁸ Rose aims to explicitly emphasize the incomprehensibility of such thought which, she argues, is merely the by-product of what she calls the 'trauma within reason itself'.⁶⁹ Like Weil, Rose has been shown to synthesize opposing themes and perspectives in contemporary thought and revive the tension within their relations. Through a collection of essays under the heading, *Judaism and Modernity*, Rose explores how this trauma of reason has led contemporary Judaic philosophy in the postmodern era to reject modernity, that is, a social order emerging from a modern, post-medieval civilization period that based reality on the superiority of Reason – the Enlightenment.⁷⁰ Put another way, she aims to show how the difficulties and misunderstandings of reason have led Philosophy and Judaism, in general, to proclaim a 'New Testament' that disposes of the broken promises of modernity, that is to say, promises of absolute and universal truths about existence that have failed to promote an appropriate living of and through finite reality. But, for Rose at least, this undertaking has meant that both modernity and Judaism have become incomprehensible in relation to one another and, in particular, within their own intellectual frameworks.⁷¹ While the content of these traumas is left for later, the basic misgivings and difficulties of reason itself are retained, which Rose presents allegorically in the form of 'friendship' at

⁶⁸ Though I intend to explore postmodern thought in further detail in the next chapter, a good discussion on some of the basic philosophical foundations of postmodernism can be found in M. J. Charlesworth, *Philosophy and Religion: From Plato to Postmodernism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), p. 9. See also, David Lyon, *Postmodernity* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), pp. 6-24; Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), pp. 45-8; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 43-4.

⁶⁹ JM, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Though I explore this period in further detail in part III, an overall view of modernity can be understood as a belief in scientific and social progress, and the power of human reason to produce freedom. See David Lyon, *Postmodernity*, p. 25.

⁷¹ As she quite clearly states in the 'Preface' to *Judaism and Modernity*, 'I write out of the violence infecting these philosophical purifications which ignore their own preconditions and outcomes'. See JM, p. x. She explores these concerns through modern Jewish philosophers such as Walter Benjamin, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martin Buber. See JM, pp. 155-224.

the beginning of *Judaism and Modernity*. Her exegesis on the interrelation of human beings is appropriate here to understanding the implications of Weil's extreme individualism and what appears to be her etheric concept of human freedom.

In the introductory chapter, Rose defines friendship as something 'one must be able to give and take from others, to acknowledge difference and identity, togetherness and separation, understanding and misunderstanding'.⁷² By this she means that friendship is always faced with unanticipated difficulties and obstacles that involve both personal and external change, that is, a change in one's self-identity as well as 'a change in the notion one holds of friendship, which has been learnt from [...] the interference of apparently extraneous meanings'.⁷³ Therefore, through all the emotions and inconsistencies that involve friendship, one ultimately commits to a process of continual inner-growth and self-transformation that is mirrored through a person's worldly relations. Where the whole idea of friendship becomes impoverished is when an unexpected crisis is precipitated by a series of three universal responses by human beings. A crisis of friendship follows either with the action of 'giving up all friends, giving up the normal expectations of friendship, or giving up the particular friend'. In any case, each response involves 'acts of destruction [that] rest on false inferences concerning the meaning of friendship'.⁷⁴ The point that is relevant in Weil's case emerges through this analysis.

The perceived failure of or crisis in friendship leads to one or more of three responses outlined above; in many cases, the giving up of a particular friend is often the first response with repeated crises leading in some cases to giving up the normal expectations of friendship followed by, perhaps, giving up all friends or relationships. In any case, the point is this: to destroy friendship and exalt its abused 'other' is to replace one mistake by another because in nearly all cases, there is often a clear anticipation and therefore misrepresentation of the meaning of friendship. Likewise, Weil's hostility towards the collective, which engineers her concept of humiliation and the lack of human interaction in her doctrine on human liberty, is that it brings up the unanticipated scenarios and eventualities that Weil's epistemology struggles to take account. In that

⁷² Ibid., p. 1.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

case, her extreme individualism and the methodology involved in eliminating the inconsistencies from thought to action exclude the possibilities of renegotiation, overcoming misunderstandings, and therefore, inner as well as outer transformation in the course of human living. Exalting the oppressed as the 'abused other' in order to overthrow and replace their oppressors appears to go no further than re-creating the exclusive, dualistic and dominant features she sort to expose in bourgeois society. Weil's misconceptions of communal life, her rather misplaced notion of humiliation and her exclusive intellectual take on human misfortune struggle at this stage to support her basic intentions to weave together the supernatural and the natural. Rather, her situation continues to elucidate that her metaphysical notions are primarily abstract, exclusive and dualistic. Immobilized by the crisis of human misfortune, Weil appears to abandon dialectic thought that aims to expose the reality of such a crisis.

In the event that there appears to be an intellectual imbalance with her response to this social crisis, one is not suggesting that her innate intentions to restore the fullness and activity of thought, and therefore, the value of human dignity is not worthy of merit; far from it. But precisely because, as she argues, thought itself is so important to the welfare of human souls, it would seem to be essential that her thoughts end up under the microscope as it were so that the credibility of her broader spiritual concerns for the human being are appreciated. Nevertheless, since she exalts the 'abused other', her thoughts are primarily directed towards a certain *type* of community in comparison to the sort of community that she fashionably termed bourgeois and exclusive. Weil's thoughts, metaphysically speaking, appear to have become too concerned to maintain a given term or ideal that has gradually become increasingly hostile towards, or even intent upon eliminating, its 'other'. This is what Rose so desperately attempts to avoid with her analysis of 'friendship', which Weil avoided earlier with her notion of 'power' as a basic contributor to oppression. Her characterization of power came about by the way in which it was understood and experienced through both the relation between the oppressed and their oppressors and through their own independent fields of perception. The point is that this metaphysical relation between a given term (or ideal) and its 'other', as Weil would put it, is a necessary synthesis in which the radical opposition in the previous sentence between human passivity and human activity is preserved. Where she is more inclined to

reserve this preservation, however, is in the relationship between the individual and nature; it appears that such a relation occurs without the intervention, and therefore the exclusion, of other human beings. By implication, though, Weil's treatise suffers from the same conundrum she identified through the scientific community in chapter II. The lack of any practical relation between the metaphysical viewpoint of the individual's inner world and the viewpoint of others as part of the external world means that the relation of a person's inner world with nature is limited to that individual's capacity to control whatever takes place through the relation between its mind and external reality.

Interestingly enough, Rose's analysis of friendship is a clear juxtaposition between thought and experience. But for Weil, this relation is more complex given that her intellectual resolutions on issues to do with passive thought, humiliation and human exploitation in society lacked the sort of social and political experience she later underwent during her year of factory work and beyond. What transpired during that year changed the direction of her life and work. Not only did her factory experiences illuminate the organizational principles behind heavy industry, not to mention the overwhelming power that industrial specialization and modern technology had over the livelihood of the human soul, but that Weil on a personal level had been impacted by her own suffering in the factories to the point that she later realized that 'the kind of inexorable oppression exercised by the factory produced submission rather than revolt'.⁷⁵ This personal experience, as with her adolescent crisis, has been shown to facilitate further experiences that eventually contributed to her conversion experiences in Solesmes. Undoubtedly, as McLellan points out, Weil's factory experiences were a necessary precondition for the various conversion experiences that she was to undergo in later life.⁷⁶ These experiences have already been shown to be instrumental to her continual reservations against the social system, and, as the discussion has attempted to illustrate, the illuminate of what became the tension between the human and the divine.⁷⁷ In light of having examined the human being in its social and political situation for Rose

⁷⁵ David McLellan, *Simone Weil: Utopian Pessimist*, p. 109.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁷⁷ See BHD, chapter 6; Rush Rees, *Simone Weil: A Sketch for a Portrait*, pp. 48-61; Eric O. Springsted, *Christus Mediator: Platonic Mediation in the Thought of Simone Weil*, p. 164, 175, 189.

and Weil, the discussion comes to an end in this chapter by finally examining Rose's universe with a broken middle.

6.9 *The Universe with a Broken Middle*

In summation, Weil's understanding of social relations is clearly as abstract as sociological reasoning and social theory. What sociology fails to understand is that attempts to achieve a principle of unity, where social propositions are reconciled, only 'fixes' their precepts to the same dominant and suppressive conceptual nature of the transcendental subject with Kant, and the infinite 'I' with Fichte. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, says Rose, faces similar misinterpretations as the *Philosophy of Right*, in that both are subjected to the domination or suppression of abstract, philosophical consciousness as natural consciousness. Firstly, the *Phenomenology* is perceived in Fichtean terms in which either the 'experience of consciousness is understood as cancelling the ["not-I"]', as a domination which does not see',⁷⁸ or the 'not-I' is conceived as the 'I's' own alienated externalisation which in turn recaptures the 'not-I' by 'an act of will' in order to become absolute.⁷⁹ Secondly, the *Philosophy of Right* is seen as Hegel's justification of natural law, the *status quo*, through his proposition – 'the actual is rational'.⁸⁰ Rose interprets Hegel, on the other hand, as ultimately working towards a 'knowingness' of illusion. It is to not dominate or suppress anything, but simply to account for, speculatively, the continual deformations of natural consciousness. As a result, through the *Phenomenology*, for example, a person's abstract philosophical consciousness is then educated according to our experiences of natural consciousness as contradiction:

If the *Phenomenology* is successful it will educate philosophical consciousness to *know* these oppositions in a wholly changed way, by making it look on and *see into* (intuit) their formation as the experiences of natural consciousness.⁸¹

⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, 150. See also L. Colletti, 'Hegel and the "Dialectic of Matter" in *Marxism and Hegel*, trans. L. Garner (London: Verso, 1973), 9-26.

⁷⁹ See K. Marx 'Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and Critical Philosophy' in *Marx Early Writings, The Pelican Marx Library*, trans. R. Livingstone and G. Benton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), 380-400.

⁸⁰ HCS, p. 81 & 79.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

So, Rose interprets Hegel by attempting to demonstrate that with every given moment of recognition as contradiction experienced by the thinking subject, there is equally a new moment in which the subject is in 'positive error', that is to say, making a mistake which becomes constructive and illuminating in experience. It would seem therefore, that Rose sees the truth in Hegel's system rather than in the *specific* determinations that shape consciousness. In this way, she brings us to an understanding of Hegel whereby natural consciousness is always subject to contradiction. There is never any resolution of it and the lack of resolution here suggests that we are endlessly 'forced' into continual change and transformation. In short, Rose wants us to experience not Hegel's methods as such, but the system behind them so that in our lives what we experience, contrary to bourgeois social relations, is the universal broken, and that individual self-consciousness is determined within and as this broken universal.

This is the task Rose sets for herself through her exploration and retrieval of speculative experience in *Hegel Contra Sociology*, which for example, appears through the unity Hegel recognised between religion and state. This unity, for Rose, is based on the individual at the centre in which it firstly grapples with contradiction and the opposition between the particular and the universal of this particular, and secondly works to understand this contradiction (in bourgeois society) through her development of speculative experience. Since the bourgeois notion of freedom and the modern person (as the 'religion of modern rational subjectivity') assert abstract reason as the principle of freedom that is actual in bourgeois society, abstract law posited as a result of this principle describes the person as illusory being and absolute positing as illusion.⁸² This is because the person as illusory being with its freedom based on abstract reason, asserts everything at a starting point from this status of illusion so that everything from this beginning becomes abstract and empty, and everything achieved is asserted as what 'ought to be'. This 'ought to be' situation splits rather than expresses the unity between religion and state. Hence, the movement of consciousness from the individual to the collective is an expression of the self-realisation of the individual, similar to Hegel's

⁸² See N. Tubbs, 'Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose', p. 50.

foresight of 'the idea a man has of God corresponds with that which he has of himself, of his freedom'.⁸³

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to illustrate the genesis of the broken middle through Hegelian thought and through a comparison between Weil and Rose on social relations. Hegel's philosophical proposition, for example, the 'actual is rational and rational is actual' is clear. It is a statement about the broken middle of social relations, and it is this aporetic middle that brings into focus the purpose of Hegel's speculative philosophy. Previous perspectives on the *Philosophy of Right* have subordinated him to a form of quietism that implies a justification of existing law because Hegel argues philosophy has come 'too late' to perform the function of 'issuing instructions on how the world ought to be'.⁸⁴ But this position has excluded the subtlety of speculative thinking that runs through Hegel's exposition. The world, indeed the state, and all its bourgeois social relations are already a result of conscious, actual activity: 'each is known by consciousness in a shape which is already determined within the broken middle of social relations'.⁸⁵ This is what Rose means when she says, the '*Philosophy of Right* presents absolute ethical life on the basis of the analysis of relative ethical life in modern, bourgeois society'.⁸⁶ In which case, Hegel uses what Rose calls the 'severe style', to understand the contradictions of bourgeois society,⁸⁷ which implies that Hegel does not resort to a justification of existing law. The 'actual and the rational', therefore, is a proposition that speculatively initiates a critique of natural law.⁸⁸

Therefore, the truth of the proposition, 'the actual is rational', is developed in our experience of its contradiction. As Rose argues, Hegel is not wanting to further the illusion with philosophical ideals that dominate and suppress social relations, but warning us against any measures we might take to dissolve or heal (social theory) the

⁸³ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, p. 79. See also HCS, p. 92.

⁸⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 23.

⁸⁵ CAE, p. 183.

⁸⁶ HCS, p. 79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80. The 'severe style' refers to Hegel's use of the speculative stage to assess social relations within bourgeois society. See *ibid.*, pp. 48-51.

⁸⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 81.

contradiction of the broken middle since it is subjected to inevitable illusion. For Weil, this has been shown to be a difficult issue to manage. For speculative experience, by implication, intends to refer to the experience of illusion of bourgeois relations, and must be taken as 'real' in order to take stock of the 'whole' contradiction, and not just the negative relation of abstract propositions. Weil reacted against such illusions with her reservations against the social order and social collectives, and their contribution to the general state of human oppression and slavery. The purpose of philosophy then is to "comprehend *what is*, [...] because *what is*, is reason", and thus to acknowledge the illusion, attain truth and become reason or absolute ethical life.⁸⁹ This becomes the unity of theory and practice, that is, 'philosophy as "speculative knowing" and "reason as the substantial essence of actuality"'.⁹⁰ Therefore, the acquisition of the contradiction, the broken middle in bourgeois society, is to conceive Hegel's thought from a world of speculation:

[...] It is the time [...] for the owl of Roman Minerva, the esoteric *concept* of philosophy, to *spread* its wings and to turn back or rather forwards into Greek Athena, the goddess of the unity of the *polis* and philosophy, absolute ethical life, the exoteric unity of theory and practice, of concept and intuition.⁹¹

For Hegel, the whole aim of absolute ethical life was to eschew the domination of the *concept* of pure practical reason. Absolute ethical life is a critique of bourgeois property relations. It may be elusive, but it is never dominant or pre-judged. Minerva cannot impose herself. Her owl can only spread its wings as dusk and herald the return of Athena, freedom without domination.⁹²

The nature of the middle then is understood as a universal that cannot be determined or defined. In the sense that we cannot determine a universal, a middle is therefore established. Kant's transcendental subject, which asserts a number of universal propositions that are indeterminate, can be classified as a middle. It is complete in itself, independent of anything else and its 'whole' identity assumes no sense of self-relation. Nevertheless, since what has already been discussed, a universal that is supposedly known cannot be a universal because it then falls into the speculative framework of self-relation. Therefore, if it chooses to be known, then it has to become something, and to

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 82

⁹² Ibid., p. 91.

become something it differentiates itself from itself according to the logic of self-relation. A middle that is differentiated in this way becomes broken – and sustains itself always as a broken middle. As a broken middle, it knows itself, and in knowing itself it ‘embraces’ Hegel’s conception of the ‘absolute’. The absolute then is the truth of self-relation⁹³ as the broken middle, which can only be achieved through division and separation.

Thinking the absolute, but at the same time the impossibility of thinking it because the individual then transcends dichotomy,⁹⁴ is rooted in the actuality of experience. It is the risk of asserting oneself in the broken middle, and at the same time having an awareness of it, that actuality manifests: ‘it is experienced both as dichotomy and as beyond dichotomy’.⁹⁵ The awareness of the broken middle is an awareness of the absolute, and actuality here is both already present and active. Actuality manifests as the productive activity of risking contradictory experience. Consequently, the manifestation of it in thought, brings forthwith the ‘whole’ of the contradiction as a self-relation, and such thinking brings duality to an end from its beginning, and non-duality into a form of unity that has neither an end nor a beginning but a *presence*. With this presence, work and love become productive and active, giving expression to the absolute as a universe where the infinite and finite are eternally united.⁹⁶

The broken middle then is a contradiction, it has no beginning or end, it cannot be fixed or predetermined, it does not dominate nor suppress, but simply has presence and substance. It requires the illusion of the independent, abstract universal as a non-relation from consciousness so that we know that our return to the ‘I’ (as a particular) from a universal is also our relation to it. Hence, any relation within the broken middle is a mystery because it facilitates a spiritual movement of life; its reality is the whole that is comprised of both the relation and non-relation of universals and particulars. This demand upon our lives might provoke our consciousness to ‘seek sanctity from the negative, from its actuality in its own light as shadow, [and] to refuse the difficulty and

⁹³ Self-relation is represented as relation and non-relation known by itself.

⁹⁴ HCS., p. 204.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 22.

struggle which the broken middle, as our own truth, sets for us. To refuse the risk of loss is to refuse the broken middle and its truth as return'.⁹⁷

Having discussed the genesis of the broken middle in relation to the development of Hegel's speculative logic that opposed Kantian and Fichtean idealism, her retrieval of contradictory experience through Hegelian social relations emerges in this chapter as a movement of contradiction within itself. In other words, as a self-relation, the now contradictory self-relation as the broken middle means that we can turn from Rose's Hegel to her presentations of the predicament of modernity and post-modernity in its various social, political and theological guises. These presentations will not attempt to heal the broken middle – far from it. Rather they will attempt to encourage the idealisations of philosophy, through various illusions reproduced by individuals and institutions, to acknowledge and recognise actuality or reality and not force, dominate or fantasize it.

In the next chapter, therefore, the investigation expands upon Rose's thought from within the broken middle, gradually moving from an impersonal, theoretical idea of contradiction, to a personal, autobiographical account of its reality. Prior to this transition, the reality of the broken middle begins philosophically with one of her most prominent, but difficult texts, *The Broken Middle*. Key discussions target and stimulate the philosophical idea of the 'broken middle', particularly where Rose explores the precepts of her philosophical idea in association with and in relation to the diremption of law and ethics through the conceptuality of the Danish Philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, and his engagement with modernity.⁹⁸ In addition to Kierkegaard, the risks of critical rationality and of political action are explored through the lives of Rahel Varnhagen and Hannah Arendt, which in turn are compared with Rose's characterisation of the 'image of "the beautiful soul"'. The image of the beautiful soul is at the centre of *The Broken Middle*.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ CAE, p. 146.

⁹⁸ Rose and Kierkegaard are so interlinked that Tubbs interprets Rose's broken middle 'as a 20th-century version of Kierkegaard's "suspension of the ethical"'. See N. Tubbs, 'Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose', pp. 56-7.

⁹⁹ L. Marcus, 'The Work of Gillian Rose: An Introduction' in *Women: A Cultural Review* 9 (1998), p. 4. This soul captures the impotence that results from excessive religious zeal, which opposes the world in the name of an inner, individual Protestantism. See for example, JM, pp. 178-9.

Chapter VII: A Systematic Presentation of the Broken Middle

[...] No generation has learned from another how to love, no generation can begin other than at the beginning, the task of no later generation is shorter than its predecessor's, and if someone, unlike the previous generation, is unwilling to stay with love but wants to go further, then that is simply idle and foolish talk.¹

7.1 Introduction

The truth of Hegelian dialectic and its demands upon experience illuminate the nature of contradiction, which, for Rose, becomes a reality in 'all thinking, all critique, [and] all protest'.² Where the previous chapter attempted to establish the genesis of Rose's broken middle through Hegel, in addition to a comparison with Weil, this chapter aims to explore the broken middle as a contradictory experience of life through her various social, political and, in particular, theological frameworks of contemporary society. This is set to establish, in conjunction with our conclusions on Simone Weil, the genesis of the search for salvation: how and where we might begin to live in and through contradiction in order to begin to explore our sense of knowingness of ourselves. This is what Rose wants us to understand as the meaning of experience, which her taxing piece of work, *The Broken Middle*, expresses. Moreover, in contrast to Kantian and Fichtean thought, this text intends to illustrate how Hegel's speculative logic corresponds to her notion of the 'pathos of the concept' in *The Broken Middle* that is to say, the conflict of contradiction, or the art of protest, in relation to the conceptual application of abstract social, political and theological ideals.

What emerges in this text are three 'key' configurations that interrelate with, but are equally independent of one another: the 'anxiety of beginning', the 'agon of authorship' and the 'equivocation of the ethical'.³ The precepts of these configurations warrant discussion because they represent Rose's broken middle in the 'pathos of the

¹ S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling: Dialectical Lyric by Johannes de Silentio*, trans. A. Hannay (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 145. Also cited in JM, p. 155.

² N. Tubbs, 'What is Love's Work?', p. 34, 41.

³ See TBM, pp. 85-89, 8-10, 172-74 respectively.

concept'. The pathos yields the fatality of presupposing that a beginning can be established in order to then expose the necessary risk of comprehending the broken middle. But since we have recognised that there is 'no End, no Telos, no Totality'⁴ with the broken middle – hence, the difficulty of the middle – this infers that we are required to keep the work in the middle, i.e. 'returning beginnings to their middles and middles to their beginning incessantly'.⁵ In other words, the beginning is expected to be the same as the result because if we recall, the broken middle implies that the beginning and the end are in contradiction. Neither does away with the speculative experience that insists upon the certainty as well as the negation of a thing. In which case, the anxiety found in the nature of beginning indicates the equivocation of the ethical and yields the agon (struggle) of authorship. With this continual movement of the configurations of the broken middle, Rose urges 'comprehension of diremption, [...] to return philosophy from her pathos to her logos'.⁶

Although she illustrates her insight into these configurations through several thinkers, she particularly develops it through the work of Søren Kierkegaard. For Rose, his thinking, like that of Hegel, illustrates the reality of the broken middle. Her concept here like with Hegel is also essentially Kierkegaardian.⁷ Rose's controversial interpretation of Hegel, which I discussed earlier, extends into further controversy with its basis in her reading of the conceptual affinity between Hegel and Kierkegaard. Contra this affinity, many scholars as well as Kierkegaard himself, emphatically declare the incommensurability between the rationalism, reason and dialectic of Hegel and the existential approach to freedom, responsibility and choice of Kierkegaard.⁸ But this is the controversy at the heart of Rose's work that illuminates the actuality of her broken

⁴ Ibid., p. 308.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 308-09.

⁶ Ibid., p. 310.

⁷ This point is also acknowledged by N. Tubbs, 'Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose', p. 54.

⁸ Kierkegaard disagreed with Hegel's idea that the development of conceptual schemes in relation to history brought the individual closer to the truth of the absolute. Kierkegaard's main issue with Hegel was the elimination in the Hegelian sense of personal responsibility through choice and action. But this view and more contemporary beliefs about Hegel, miss the essence of his system, and if we recall from the end of chapter VI, it is his system that must be inclusive of and be used in relation to his ideas, says Rose, for it is this priority that governs the movements of consciousness which we observe, for example, in his POS. See M. C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood, Hegel and Kierkegaard* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981); N. Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, trans. G. L. Stegren (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); A. Hannay, *Kierkegaard: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1982). See also, S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard. V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 150-207.

middle. She reads Hegel and Kierkegaard as equally speculative, paradoxical and vital for self-realisation in the broken middle, which her configurations of it strongly emphasise. In particular, the ‘anxiety of beginning’ assists with the ‘appearance’ of the broken middle and the disjunctions between the universal, particular and singular, in institutions.⁹

These breaks intend to depict post-modernism’s renunciation of metaphysics and reason in favour of an ‘unconceptualised aporia’,¹⁰ ‘the Other’. This, if one recalls from the previous chapter, illustrates how reason has become replaced with its abused ‘other’ as an ideal. Nevertheless, as it pits its other against domination,¹¹ the repetition of duality as the ‘pathos of the concept’ emerges into what becomes the fatality of post-modernity. With this thought, philosophy is subordinated again to the illusory “totalisation” or “closure” of social theory, which is illustrated through John Milbank’s *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Practice* and represented in the individual as the image of ‘the beautiful soul’. Firstly, by disowning any form of conceptuality, post-modernity mends the diremption of law and ethics, ‘the tension of freedom and unfreedom, the struggle between universality, particularity, and singularity’.¹² Secondly, to reside on the singularity of its others, even though it pits them against domination, disqualifies the movement of the broken middle by prohibiting ‘the actuality of any opposition which might initiate process and pain – any risk of coming to know’.¹³

Where I have in the two previous chapters explored the problematic of ‘Western Metaphysics’, I intend to reflect here upon the collective thought, of consciousness, of post-modern institutions apart from but in relation to Rose’s broken middle, (using the above configurations) so that the restoration of the logos from the pathos of the concept draws the investigation towards the moment in which the individual hosts the broken middle, and becomes what it is in Rose’s ‘third city’, the ‘just city’.¹⁴ Here, the soul

⁹ TBM, xii. The term ‘singular’, according to Rose, refers to a singularity without its contraries of universal and particular. See *ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* The ‘unconceptualised aporia’ does not intend to maintain the tension between contrary propositions.

¹¹ In which case, the impenetrable disjunctions here will attempt to be mended ‘with *love*, forced or fantasized into the state’. See TBM, p. xii.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ In the ‘just city’ the success of reason is exalted as its failure because of the ‘degraded power and exalted ethics, Athens and Jerusalem.’ See MBL.

works for salvation through the equivocation of the city, which describes the way in which individual and collective consciousnesses mirror one another within their own contradictory self-relation. Since this is explored in further detail in the last chapter on salvation, I now present a ‘systematic’ presentation of the broken middle with a discussion on the nature of beginning.

7.2 *The Importance of Beginning in the Middle*

7.2.1 Hegel

To make a beginning with the element of certainty in mind is entirely different from making one without it. Hegel, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, compounds this issue as the problem of beginning. This problem, which becomes the philosopher’s dilemma, is intended to act as an introduction to his philosophical system:

It is customary to preface a work with an explanation of the author’s aim, why he wrote the book, and the relationship in which he believes it to stand to other earlier or contemporary treatises on the same subject. In the case of a philosophical work, however, such an explanation seems not only superfluous but, in view of the nature of the subject-matter, even inappropriate and misleading. For whatever might appropriately be said about philosophy in a preface – say a historical *statement* of the main drift and the point of view, the general content and results, a string of random assertions and assurances about truth – none of this can be accepted as the way in which to expound philosophical truth.¹⁵

According to Hegel, the author here is expected to state conclusions that as of yet require prior validation and argumentation, which in the *Phenomenology* becomes the gradual unfolding of consciousness toward the absolute knowing of Spirit. This suggests that claims made in advance as a way in which to make any sort of beginning tend to be one-sided and debatable within that perspective, not to mention the contrary viewpoints the author is inclined to correct or supplement as a way that verifies the one-sided, often abstract conclusion as a beginning. In other words, the thinking author tends, says Hegel, to push ahead with its beginnings that carry no risk or difficulty – a beginning in other words, that already controls, contains and determines its aim or aims. In this way, traditional philosophical works and their authors tend to get hooked on the ‘antithesis of

¹⁵ POS, § 1.

truth and falsity' so much so that one expects philosophical systems to be either accepted or contradicted: 'hence it finds only acceptance or rejection' because their beginnings that include the anxiety of avoiding risk and failure, fail to receive the diversity of philosophical systems that work towards a 'progressive unfolding of truth' rather than 'simple disagreements'.¹⁶ Furthermore, the ones that fear risk and failure with their beginnings create an impression of hard work and serious commitment to the problem where in fact one could not be more mistaken in their assertions.

Rose explores this mistake, as well as the lack of mistakes, by those that avoid the uncontrollable middle. Hegel extends the dubiousness of beginnings and ends into anxiety by stating them as lifeless universals, that is, making beginnings without simultaneously carrying them out, and making claims about actual knowledge that exclude 'the way to an experience of the real issue'.¹⁷ This experience for Rose means that Hegel's system in the *Phenomenology* 'is the quintessence of agon of authorship' because the speculative uncertainty of beginning contains the truth of the identity or relation of a thing (phenomenological repetition) as 'the philosophical reconstruction and education of risk'. This risk is the trace of the 'crisis' of the developmental and changing configuration of concept and object, and each transition is contrary to the Kantian and Fichtean philosophical system. It represents Hegel's idea of individual freedom in the *Phenomenology*, that is, freedom where the individual is prepared to face the future anxiously, with risk, so that it proclaims its presence in the conflict posed by the threat of uncontrollable change.

So, the crisis of communication as the 'agon of authorship' resides in the difficulty of beginning, and this difficulty to which Hegel's *Phenomenology* alludes, emphasises the point that thinking has already begun. The only thing we need to recognise is that whatever we say is always in contradiction, and therefore, what we say becomes a matter of perception that is endlessly open to question. Our part, which Rose points out with Hegel and also with Kierkegaard, is to acknowledge this contradiction or 'fertile misperception' as natural to thinking.¹⁸ In this way, Rose attempts to show that our inclination to do the contrary, that is, to hold to a perfected ideal in the beginning and

¹⁶ Ibid., § 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., § 4.

¹⁸ Williams makes a similar point in his essay, 'Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose', p. 11. See also, TBM, pp. 3-50.

for an end is because we know through this illusory process that our location in the 'middle' is really an ambiguous, uncertain place. It is the presupposition of determination prior to experience or knowledge that indicates to Rose's identification of law as strategy and social form¹⁹ and the result that illustrates the real nature of our power. This power is limited if we fail to recognise our illusions, and we become imprisoned by them. Conversely, we work towards what is free and unlimited in ourselves if we avoid the tendency to rationalise and eternalise our illusions as absolute and real. Thus, if we surrender to actuality with difficulty we become aware of what it is to fail. In this case, Rose intends to remind us about failure by recognising that since we are in the broken middle, every beginning is subject to its 'occlusions and stumbling blocks' which appear as a mask of illusion.²⁰

7.2.2 Kierkegaard

Like Hegel, Rose shows that Kierkegaard similarly recognised how individuals and social institutions forget what it is to fail, and Christianity in his hometown, Copenhagen, represented this reality. Beginnings, Kierkegaard postulates, arise from the abyss of one-sided, independent resolutions, which can neither be adequately understood nor satisfactorily explained.²¹ This problematic of beginnings arises from his idea of subjectivity as ethical substance, which is shown for example, as the *difficulty* of the task of being ethical. Being ethical for Kierkegaard, like Hegel, is a mode of self-relation that is risky but is the only meaningful way in which a person is able to express his/her life: 'the self is a relation which relates itself to its own self'.²² This self-relation or idea of subjectivity is the subject's relation to the content of knowledge, that is, objective knowledge. So, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity for Kierkegaard is that the latter is an emphasis on what is said, whereas the former emphasises '*how* it is said'. He continues, 'this (how) is not to be understood as a manner [or an] oral delivery, but it is understood as the relation of the existing person, in his existence, to what is said'.²³ On

¹⁹ See R. D. Williams, p. 10.

²⁰ TBM, pp. 6-10.

²¹ See S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong, pp. 225-6. See also, M. C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood, Hegel and Kierkegaard*, pp. 2-3.

²² S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and the Sickness unto Death*, trans. W. Lowrie (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1954), p. 146.

²³ S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 202.

this basis, subjectivity then is equally a form of thinking that involves what Kierkegaard regards as a double-reflection:

The reflection of inwardness is the subjective's thinker's double reflection. In thinking he thinks the universal, but existing in his thinking, as acquiring this in his inwardness, he becomes more and more subjective [...].²⁴

This passage describes how the subjective thinker starts with the universal (objective knowledge) but then turns his attention inward in order to establish some sort of new relationship between the thinker and objective or universal knowledge. This relationship, says Kierkegaard, does not mean that a person is destined to arrive at absolute or infinite knowledge in their experiences, but that they are able to conceive the concept of the absolute or infinite. The point that he reaches, which Rose finds in Hegel and therefore the affinity between these two thinkers, is the existence of this 'gap' between the universal/absolute and particular/contingent as the existing/being and thinking subject. The subject for Rose in her reading of both Hegel and Kierkegaard is the way in which it shuttles between the universal and particular, being and thinking in contradiction. In this way, the self-relation of subjectivity means that communication is indirect and in crisis, that is to say, to bring forth the idea of double-reflection in the individual means that subjective thinking is always in danger of losing its meaningfulness if it is communicated in a direct way.

But why one may ask, does this thinking become meaningless when communicated directly? For Kierkegaard, direct communication always misses or leaves something out, which illustrates the author's own relation to what is said. This is the author's double-reflection as self-relation. Direct communication by the author as a definitive beginning infers that the reader relates the double-reflection or self-relation of the author to him/herself without, however, the reader's own double-reflection. In this way, the reader and the author fall into the trap of reducing subjective knowledge or experience into objective knowledge or experience. Rose attempts to show that neither Kierkegaard nor Hegel want us to do this because it brings forth dualistic thinking which attempts to overcome the difficulty or despair of striving for the absolute that is, in the first place, absurd and unachievable.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

Thus, for the preservation of existential and phenomenological freedom, subject and object, author and reader need to be engaged with indirect communication in which each reciprocally attends to the others' double-reflection in order to appropriate this process within their own double-reflection. This is analogous to Rose's double dilemma of self-relation or contradictory self-relation of the broken middle. The importance of indirect communication which Rose sees in both these authors is validated by the problem of directness: to elucidate the motive and purpose of an author is to mistakenly confuse authorial intention for essential meaning so that the reader is unable to engage with the written text itself.²⁵ As this crisis of communication for Rose is apparent not just as the 'agon of authorship' with Hegel, but equally with Kierkegaard and his authorship under the pseudonymous guise of Johannes Climacus:²⁶

By the end of the "introduction", Johannes Climacus has two abiding qualities: an insatiable intellectual eros, "his delight to begin with a simple thought and then, by way of coherent thinking, to climb step by step to a higher one, because to him coherent thinking was a *scala paradisi*"; and, when coherence breaks down and he becomes despondent, a relish for difficulty: "he then had an ever higher goal: with his will to press his way through the windings of the difficulty".²⁷

The difficulty of beginning Climacus accepts, and in doing so he accepts the nature of contradiction as 'the collision of reality and ideality that gives rise to consciousness, and hence to doubt'.²⁸ Doubt allows Climacus, through Kierkegaard, to provide the individual with an existential response that enables meaning and truth to emerge not objectively through direct communication but indirectly through a 'subjective appropriation process'.²⁹ This is the very thing that makes the subjective individual's life significant. With the former way of communicating, Kierkegaard reminds us that objective determination with the ethical, for example, is broken because a culture in this

²⁵ See similar comments made by M. C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood, Hegel and Kierkegaard*, p. 3.

²⁶ 'It gives me pleasure to see that the pseudonyms presumably aware of the relation substituting between the method of indirect communication and the truth as inwardness, have themselves said nothing, nor misused a preface to assume an official attitude toward the production, as if an author were in a purely legal sense the best interpreter of his own words; [...] or as if it were certain that it was realised because the author himself says so in the preface'. See S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 225-26.

²⁷ TBM, p. 31.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁹ An individual who requests for him or herself the relation of the content of what is understood to be objective knowledge. See M. C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood, Hegel and Kierkegaard*, p. 4.

way of thinking and living has forgotten what it is to fail. This is why the way in which we begin is, like with Hegel, so important. As Rose reminds us, and Kierkegaard argues, one must just begin³⁰ because in doing so, the individual or culture is open to failure. Both in this way act as a source of power, as an internally critical and anxious self-perception that actualises the ethical as substance. Thus, we ‘must “suspend” the existing order *understood as a system that has forgotten how to fail*’,³¹ a system that guarantees successful performance and determination – we must, says Kierkegaard, ‘suspend the ethical’.

The context here of Kierkegaard’s ‘suspension of the ethical’ is not to abolish a system but suspend it for the movement of existential, subjective inwardness:

To “posit that the ethical is ‘suspended’ is to acknowledge that it is always already presupposed”. It grants a momentary licence to hold the ethical fixed and unchanging. But once this is granted, the moment will be imperceptible, for the movement of faith does not take place in time, or, it takes place in every moment of time; whereas, if the ethical is abolished, then a time outside time, or a social reality outside social reality, must, illogically, be posited.³²

For Rose this suspension is revealed as ‘an intrinsic part of the historically specific modes of equivocation [...]’.³³ Put abstractly, she says, the authorship of Kierkegaard like Hegel, uncover the ‘*inversions of instituted meaning* attendant on a culture’ in which every meaning is infected with the institutions it seeks to avoid, and individual inwardness is inverted into the ruthlessness of social institutions.³⁴ ‘Equivocation of the ethical’ as another of Rose’s configurations of the broken middle – its ‘reverse faces and inverse meanings’, through separation, subordination and ‘liberation’, the duality of these institutions, but equally contrary institutions – highlight the exaltation of the ‘abused other’. These contrary institutions allude to the same level of objective determination that does away with suspension and equivocation.

In this way, Rose illustrates as with Hegel, that Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous figures, Climacus as well as another pseudonymous entity, De Silentio, require us to

³⁰ Ibid., p. 3. See also, S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments: Johannes Climacus*, in *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, VII, trans. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 248-9.

³¹ R. D. Williams, p. 12.

³² TBM, p. 148.

³³ Ibid., pp. 163-4.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 164.

accept the predicament of the broken middle, and risk the loss of faith for beginning with (and from) our concept of thought: ‘the beginning is inferred, *de silentio: de silentio* is the legal term for inference from omission’.³⁵ In our world in which ‘there seems to be a low tolerance of equivocation’, Rose addresses here and as a universal belief, the problem individuals and social institutions face, namely, the reproduction of ‘dualistic ways of thinking’.³⁶ In philosophy, reason has been recognised as destroying or suppressing their ‘others’ ‘in the name of universal interest’, but then the organisation of contrary institutions says Rose, that have resurrected the ‘abused other’ continue the legacy of history as the perpetuation of dualisms. In short therefore, wisdom, truth or reason works with equivocation.³⁷

7.3 *Love in Violence and Violence in Love*

With the tenet of ‘equivocation’ as the bedrock of Rose’s broken middle, one can see why *The Broken Middle* is the most human response to traditions that break away from thinking itself and the importance of the identity of individuality. This separation by tradition for Rose, begs the question: ‘why has the tradition not trusted itself to think without such towering “authorities” and “masters”, without attributing the content and matter of the tradition to the writing of genii [...]’.³⁸ Rose uses Hegel and Kierkegaard as her genii in which their affinity lies not just in their acquaintance with the broken middle but how traditions have constantly misinterpreted them by applying its beginnings, presuppositions – its towering ‘authorities’ and ‘masters’ – to them that in many ways miss the impact of their message.³⁹ Rather, as I have discussed, the emphasis by Rose in relation to both these thinkers is to return to where we began – ‘to begin again by developing the beginning’ – with the difficulty and anxiety of beginning as ‘the existential failing towards and away from the middle itself’,⁴⁰ which in turn, merges into

³⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁶ See MBL, pp. 2-3.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

³⁸ TBM, p. 6.

³⁹ Rose cites N. Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*; A. Hannay, *Kierkegaard: The Arguments of the Philosophers*, and M. C. Taylor, *Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel and Kierkegaard*. See *ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

our experience simultaneously of the equivocation of concept, institution or ethic and the agon of authorship.

This is precisely the goal Rose sets herself with the ‘authorships’ of Hegel and Kierkegaard. Their work, even their logic, orientated around the art and nature of beginning, intends to bring the revelation (Jerusalem) into philosophy (Athens) which integrates the reality of the broken middle, i.e. as the incursion of the incomprehensible (Kierkegaard) and, as triune or aporetic reason – universal, particular and singular (Hegel).⁴¹ Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous entities, *De Silentio* and *Johannes Climacus* commit to the difficulty of beginning, the ‘anxiety of beginning’, which ultimately induces the configurations of ‘agon of authorship’ and ‘equivocation of the ethical’, even to the point where revelation serves to ‘leave the ethical open and unresolved’.⁴² Thus, revelation co-joined to philosophy, leaving reason stationed within its aporetic condition, is contrary to post-modernism, social theory and political theologies for example,⁴³ which being inclined to uphold ‘Jerusalem’, attempt to take us out of time, and therefore seal our fate of powerlessness without end.⁴⁴

This result and the reason for approaching Rose’s configurations of the broken middle through the authorships of Hegel and Kierkegaard, is to illustrate the sense of contradiction one faces in the moment of real action. Furthermore, by acting from these contradictory moments we realise that power does not exist out of time – from which we contrive and seal our powerlessness in the world – but in the suspension of ‘orders’ such as the ethical. This suspension means that any action we take is done without foreseeing in advance, how successful, thorough or ordered it might be. Rose’s broken middle is asking for an awareness of what constrains us in our construction of social, political and religious frameworks so that in any given act we are open to change, salutary criticism and therefore, recognition of the possibility of failure. Thus, risk, negotiation of difference or otherness in any given order, the ethical for example, includes ‘violence’.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Political theology refers to how solutions of divinity attempt to reconfigure and resolve political/social predicaments. I intend to discuss in due course how the tenets of these theologies in the modern era attempt to ‘cloud’ the identity of the individual by the ‘absurdity of “receiving everything back”, “reconciliation”, even “totalisation” – the tragedy of post-modernity and its attempts to mend the diremption of ethics and law’. See *ibid.*, p. xii. .

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-66.

‘Violence’ is inseparable from staking oneself, from experience, at the heart of the broken middle.⁴⁵ It is the conflict of love, a conflict that is, in Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling* under de Silentio, represented by Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac.

The sacrifice becomes a matter of faith in which love is always found to be involved in violence. De Silentio’s objective, says Rose, is to show how the ideal of ‘love without violence’ is represented as lacking faith. In the paradox of love in violence and violence in love, Abraham is an individual in conflict with himself and with his God.⁴⁶ His conflict, says Rose, epitomises ‘the violence in love and the love in violence’ in the ‘suspension of the ethical’.⁴⁷ His act is not arbitrary violence, but an act that is always ‘already knowing yet willing to stake oneself again’. In this way, the inauguration of ‘violence’ into action is not, therefore, a revolution that abolishes the ethical, the nature and structure of collective interests, or of bourgeois social relations (Hegel), in which its outcome establishes ‘an anti-order of arbitrary free-for-all’.⁴⁸ Rather, it is an act of self-deprivation, which Abraham fulfils, in the moment of suspending the ethical, ‘a renunciation of self-possession that is content with never failing’.⁴⁹ Such oblation, rather than sacrifice in ‘violence’ that ensures critique and failure, brings to fruition contradictions from which speculative expression gives us our freedom. Rose’s attempt to steer us away from the isolation of violence (utopia) is her way of orchestrating the true balance of suspension, which is to set a beginning without denying the equivocation of the middle.⁵⁰

In short, suspension and equivocation highlight the irresolvable tension between our commitment to the universal and equally our attention to the particular. The dilemma that resides upon the tension and ‘gap’ between the universal and particular is the difficulty of living with an order based upon peaceful, timeless abstractions (utopia or agape of the state or of collective interests). Yet, the subjective disposition of the particular, the individual, that is unable to establish social practice means that truthful action is ‘shadowed’ or hidden behind the domination and suppression of the former. In

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 151.

⁴⁶ See chapter V & VI of S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*. See also, P. Gardiner *Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴⁷ TBM, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁸ R. D. Williams, p. 12. See *ibid.*, pp. 147-52.

⁴⁹ R. D. Williams, p. 12.

⁵⁰ TBM, p. 149.

which case, the conflict of interest here resides between the state and the individual,⁵¹ and the agon of authorship, which remains with anxiety of beginning and equivocation of the ethical symbolises this conflict.

In this way, the tensions of truth in thought and action, that reside within these configurations of the equivocation of the middle must avoid the pull towards 'totalisation', 'resolution' or 'reconciliation' with what Rose calls 'holy middles', that is, orders or systems prevalent in post-modernity which take us out of time – peace or unity beyond time.⁵² It attempts to mend the broken middle which is the ultimate objective Rose wants political and collective life to avoid in thought and action. By avoiding this we resume the speculative tension of the relation and equally non-relation between the universal and particular: the person or author has to stake 'a position that necessarily involves claiming something over and against an other, while remembering that the other still [...] requires to be understood, to be *thought*'.⁵³ She wants us, as with Abraham, to make a declaration of faith which deepens our self-inquiry along the pathway of difficulty in the broken middle.

7.4 *The Truth of Rose's Configurations*

7.4.1 'Holy Middles' in Political Theology

Therefore, the tension in Rose's configurations that reside within the endless collisions between the individual and state or collective – actual experience – involves the endless possibility of error and critique. If we avoid tension and extrapolate modes of reconciliation or unity that perpetuate the certainty of abstract universalism (which excludes negation) for political or collective interest, we are left, says Rose, with a reality that us away from equivocation and draws us closer to a world of 'holy middles'. This is for Rose 'Jerusalem' in post-modernity as 'New Jerusalem' (new revelation) which is 'the promise of unending angelic conviviality – new but ancient political theology'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 277ff.

⁵² See *ibid.*, pp. 277-96

⁵³ See R. D. Williams, p. 13

⁵⁴ TBM, p. 278.

Political theology represents 'New Jerusalem' through its attempts to overcome the tension and conflict of its dualistic thinking. Theology becomes political because it provides holistic solutions for and perspectives on not just the inner workings of the soul, but equally the domain of society and history and its political/social problems. For example, John Milbank attempts to establish dialogue and a divine schema of peaceful coexistence between theology and secular social theory. Put another way, he endeavours to persuade theologians not to cede the domains of social and political theory and practice to the cognitive claims of secular reason, that is, to avoid the belief that modern, scientific reason can, over and above Christianity, accommodate insights and analyses, for example, of liberal political science, sociology, and social theory.⁵⁵ It is Milbank's thinking, not to mention the thinking of political theology in general, on which Rose critically reflects in her concern with the current age of post-modernity. They both, she says, attempt to negotiate the reconciliation of the broken conceptuality of the middle, the pathos of the concept, with the application of 'holy middles' that avoid the speculative method altogether and consequently resist any degree of formative experience.⁵⁶

Therefore, what Milbank amongst several other authors in political theology fail to recognise is that their inclination to transcend what they see as error is only to repeat it with modes of dualistic thinking in their theorising,⁵⁷ which of course we recognise from earlier discussions with Kant and Fichte's philosophical systems.

⁵⁵ See J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 1, 260.

⁵⁶ Using various authorships such as Mark Taylor and John Milbank in particular, Rose illustrates how their political theologies, representing post-modern thought, mend the middle with holiness without examination of its brokenness. These theologies she argues, represent 'New Jerusalem' which replaces 'old Athens'. See TBM, pp. 278-82. Though Rose's arguments here are probably debatable, other critical accounts on Milbank's thinking, particularly on his text, *Theology and Social Theory*, follow the general tenor of Rose's criticisms of his ideas. I will mention some in brief in order to extrapolate the significance of 'holy middles', but I would add nevertheless, that my concern is to pursue Rose's thinking into more appropriate areas of discussions, which assess how the individual lives in and with contradiction and difficulty.

⁵⁷ Dualism is repeated in post-modern theology through its attempts to find a 'totalisation' or 'closure' theory towards political and social practice. Apart from John Milbank, see for example, M. C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); E. Levinas, 'Ideology and Idealism' (1975), and 'Ethics as First Philosophy' (1984), in *The Levinas Reader*, trans. S. Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 235-48, 'Ethics and Spirit', in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. S. Hand (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 75-87; J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1, trans. T. McCarthy (London: Heinemann, 1984). See also Rose's critical commentary in TBM, pp. 245-6, ch.6 passim; JM, 127-54, 175-210, 211-224.

7.4.2 Milbank's Political Theology

In Milbank's case, his theory, as with political theologies on the whole, uses divine sovereignty in order to mend the middle, that is, to do 'justice to the unequivocal middle'.⁵⁸ The tenet of his position is that social theory – being a secular discourse based on reason that justifies general laws and consolidates empirical data into social practice – is a heresy of Christianity. He strongly disagrees with the growing trend in sociology to isolate religion from the rest of social formations, which is why he laments upon the way secular discourses adapt insights from Christian life and denature its ecclesiological precepts by couching them in modern rational schemas.⁵⁹ In such cases, Milbank argues that contemporary social theory based upon secular reason is exclusive in the sense that, any cooperation with it from the perspective of religion is excluded. As mentioned already, Milbank's vision of the ending of modernity means here the end of the modern predicament of theology. That is, it no longer needs to measure up to accepted secular standards of truth or 'normative rationality'.⁶⁰ Therefore, for Milbank, ecclesiology – understood as ecclesial practice, worship and enactment – within itself contains all the 'ingredients' of a 'social theory'.

Milbank is thus intent upon transcending all structures and systems belonging to the '*saeculum*', by integrating orthodox Christianity and its celebration of 'peacefulness' into a tool by means of which to debunk modern social theory. At the same time, however, he willingly adapts the modern stance of differentiation in post-modern thinking in relation to Christianity. But where the secular discourses of social theory talk about difference as 'oppositional difference',⁶¹ Milbank's socialism is represented by non-oppositional, harmonious difference⁶² which is dependent upon his ecclesiology and the Triune God of Christianity mediated through Augustine's image of the exalted,

⁵⁸ TBM, p. 284.

⁵⁹ See J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, pp. 37-41.

⁶⁰ J. Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism": A Short Summa in Forty Two Responses to Unasked Questions', p. 225.

⁶¹ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 289.

⁶² See 'The Other City: Theology as Social Science' in *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, p. 423.

'heavenly city'.⁶³ The citizens of this 'city' are motivated towards sociality through their practice of love, which descends from and is vivified by heaven through the incarnation of the Son and the emanation of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Milbank talks of 'communities of love' without violence as the intersection of the individual and the state that are held together by bonds of 'conviviality'. This he regards as civil society.⁶⁴

Rose criticises Milbank, however, amongst others, for developing 'holy middles' that repeat modernity's legacy of failed objectivity. This is evident when comparing his 'harmonious anthology of difference' with the secular dictum of 'oppositional difference', which amounts to the irreconcilable antagonism he creates between the 'secular city' and 'heavenly city'. Milbank, in short, goes further by pointing out that 'the earthly city of violence can (and must) be put to shame by the Christian testimony to "non-violence", and "ontological peace"'.⁶⁵ Christianity, which refuses to believe in violence, is objective because it is not just different, but is different from all other cultural systems 'which it exposes as threatened by incipient nihilism'.⁶⁶ In this way Milbank albeit unintentionally not only returns us to risk – in the sense that he commits the same crime of developing a system of 'oppositional differences'⁶⁷ that returns us to difficulty, tension and anxiety – but he opts for the singularity of the Christian faith by classing its 'holy city' as exclusive of any other. Such difference and exclusivity explains Rose's critique. Milbank's anthology is a representation that transcends contraries, 'freedom and unfreedom' for example, and incorporates holiness – ecclesial practice extended to the divine⁶⁸ – without tension and difficulty. Here, the middle is mended as 'holiness' – 'without that examination of the *broken* middle' which repeats the unfreedom, says Rose, they prefer not to know.⁶⁹ This repetition is apparent when there is no difference between both the nihilistic, secular culture and Milbank's ecclesiology of 'violent' contest and oppositional difference, in which the latter repeats the same intolerance as the secular

⁶³ J. Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism", p. 229.

⁶⁴ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 422.

⁶⁵ G. D. Schrijver, 'From Ecclesiology to Theology as Social Theory', in *The Use of Mediations in Theology*, 2000, http://www.theo.kuleuven.ac.be/clt/gds_wager_index.htm (21 April 2003). See also, *ibid.*, p. 411.

⁶⁶ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 381.

⁶⁷ See S. Shakespeare, 'The New Romantics: A Critique of Radical Orthodoxy' in *Theology* 103 (2000), 163-177.

⁶⁸ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 6.

⁶⁹ See TBM, p. 284.

world that he accuses of excluding religion from social and political theory and practice.⁷⁰

This is an example here in which Rose describes ‘the pathos of the concept’ as the ‘cyclical repetition’ from modernity to post-modernity in which the domination of enlightenment reason is replaced and repeated by the domination and suppression of the ‘abused Other’, in Milbank’s case, Augustine’s ‘holy city’ of communal love and peace. But does a ‘holy middle’ such as this corrupt and in what precise way does Milbank fall victim to this when he attempts to engage with the promise of divine friendship in order to reform the world? To answer this, we need to explore further the nature and implications of holiness in the middle.

7.4.3 The Terror of Holiness

As I have attempted to show and contrary to establishing unity, harmony without violence and love, holy middles return the individual to risk, that is, the predicament and tension in the relation between the universal and particular. The illusion of holiness with Milbank’s heavenly community repeats the contradiction of the broken middle because even though it attempts to transcend ‘modern contraries’ and secular discourses, he unintentionally returns the individual to risk when the middle, community of love, is exclusive and set in opposition to secular culture. It is the problem of mutual exclusiveness, but also the claim of objectivity of the Christian faith which constitute his problem. He fails to recognise how the argument for existential ecclesiology which he says offers the key for doing sociology,⁷¹ sets up oppositions (oppositional differences) and divisions that repeat the same position he finds, as does Rose, with sociological reasoning and its claims towards the exclusivity and objectivity of social theory and practice.⁷²

⁷⁰ Rowan Williams makes a similar point to Rose that Milbank is obsessed with this mutual exclusiveness, slipping into the battlefield of history of ideal types, that is, ideal types of good and bad societies, beneficial and limiting social systems. See R. D. Williams, ‘A Theological Critique of Milbank’, in R. Gill (ed.), *Theology and Sociology* (London: Cassell, 1996), p. 437. Williams appropriately asks like Rose, whether Milbank’s peace beyond time is not ‘totalising and ahistorical’ and therefore, devoid of facing tragedy, that is, the lack of tension and risk Rose criticises in respect of Milbank’s ‘holy city’. See R. D. Williams, ‘Saving Time: thoughts on practice, patience and vision’, *New Blackfriars* 73 (1992), pp. 323-25.

⁷¹ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 380.

⁷² See, for example, HCS.

Do not do as Milbank does, define or comprehend the broken middle as “violence” and therefore transmute it into holiness.⁷³ As I have discussed in the previous chapter on the problematic of an exalted ‘abused other’, the certainty it appears to engineer ‘does not empower, it subjugates, and the principled otherness sent out to reform the world will expend a violence equal to the violence it accuses’.⁷⁴ The accusation of violence directed towards the broken middle is developed along the pathway to holiness. This is nothing other than ‘violence’ disguised as ‘love’ that attempts to overcome the broken middle of the state: ‘the middle made holy conserves the phantasy of originary violence’.⁷⁵

The challenge then is to avoid the ‘cynicism of violence’⁷⁶ from post-modernity, and relish in its glory and capacity to evoke the individual’s contradictory self-relation. It is contra violence in love and the love in violence in holiness that we need to assess how this individual in Augustine’s ‘heavenly city’, ‘the beautiful soul’ is called into activity within himself.⁷⁷ This process takes the contradiction of the broken middle of institutions and places it in relation to the individual. Here, the person, contra ‘the beautiful soul’ begins to ‘own’ itself as the crucial self-understanding and self-critique of the ‘violence in love’ that features at the heart of Rose’s broken middle. In this way, salvation then begins to emerge for Rose, to a lesser extent with Weil, not through the ‘city of holiness’ but the ‘city of equivocation’.

7.5 *Protestantism and ‘The Beautiful Soul’*

7.5.1 Milbank’s Augustine and the Problem of non-Interiority

With Milbank we see how his social transformation moves away from the political task, that is, a task that implicitly involves contradiction and with it, risk, critique and tension, and instead, how he offers an interpretation of ‘Christian culture’ of love without

⁷³ Ibid., p. 296.

⁷⁴ See JM, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ TBM, p. 309.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ This lack of experience and withdrawal into private cultivation is Rose’s characterisation of ‘the beautiful soul’ which she adopts from the German Novelist, Johann Goethe’s, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship and Travels*. See *ibid.*, p. 188, 314.

violence that 'vends' its truth as a means of harmonious dictum of eternal friendship and mutual cooperation. The contrast between the Christian and secular community in *Theology and Social Theory* is the ontological priority of harmony and peace over anarchy and violence.⁷⁸ This elaborate vision of social equanimity of love without violence appears through Milbank's arbitrary ideal types of good and bad social orders which are related and identified through his reading of Augustine's distinction and boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy.⁷⁹ But this faces an even deeper issue in that Milbank fails to understand Augustine's distinction between self and other. Rather Milbank links this distinction to a denial of Augustinian interiority in favour of exteriority. Milbank 'attempts to base a community entirely on an "inward" purity of intention [that] cuts them off from the main body of Christians who share the same beliefs and practices', whilst Augustine, expressing 'the unity and inter-communion of Christians', argues that this is not just a 'desirable appendage of Christian practice, but is itself at the heart of the actuality of redemption'.⁸⁰

Milbank, therefore, argues that the real heresy is interiority as Augustine's passionate longing for 'unity and inter-communion of Christians' is the true foundation of communal peace and harmony. In this way, for Milbank, 'to secure peace is to draw boundaries around "the same" and to exclude "the other", to promote some practices and disallow alternatives'.⁸¹ This approach in the modern era illustrates Augustinian postmodernism, that is, Milbank's Augustine represents an optimistic outlook of Christian, utopian peace as 'the whole foundation for distinguishing true Christianity not only from old paganism, but from what modernity made of it and from postmodern paganism'.⁸² These distinctions imply that the security of peace establishes the self, interiority, through drawing 'boundaries around "the same" and exclud[ing] "the other"'.⁸²

But Milbank's reading of Augustine being entirely focussed on the exteriority of Christian social theory and practice has on numerous occasions been criticised for giving insufficient attention to the 'violence' at the heart of Augustine's quest for social

⁷⁸ J. Milbank, 'Postmodern Critical Augustinianism', p. 228.

⁷⁹ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 158. See also, R. D. Williams, 'A Theological Critique of Milbank', p. 437.

⁸⁰ J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp. 402-3.

⁸¹ J. Milbank, "Postmodern Critical Augustinianism", p. 229.

⁸² W. J. Hankey, 'Re-Christianising Augustine Postmodern Style', *Animus: a Philosophical Journal of our Time*, 1997, § 71, <http://www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/1997vol2/hankey1.htm> (26 April 2003).

equanimity.⁸³ His argument for a 'holy city' is dependent upon the fact he separates it from the violence of 'oppositional differences' which he insists characterise the secular (pagan) realm. In which case, he is thus compelled to read Augustine without violence so that peace becomes absolutely essential in his discourse. Without it, Milbank has no defence to support his project against the secular rationality of modernity and 'postmodern paganism'.⁸⁴ On this basis, but with a different critical slant, Rose argues that Milbank's lack of interiority which is apparent with his reading of Augustine, establishes strict dualistic divisions between his 'nomadic', Christian culture and secular culture in which the exclusiveness and lack of tension (a missing 'third' in the triune structure of the broken middle) in his ecclesiology inverts itself to exert a violence it accuses its 'other' of perpetuating: 'the people of God are a specific and vulnerable human group whose perception of their interest is as flawed and liable to violence as any other's [...]'.⁸⁵

What sustains this claim is an exegesis of Christianity, which we see here with Milbank, falling into the temptation of giving up the contradiction. To give it up is to avoid the difficulty of reality, and instead succumb to the illusion of rivalry. This reality which Rose recognises in Milbank, is illustrated in a more serious way with her views on Protestantism and the interiority of its members symbolising Goethe's 'beautiful soul'.

7.5.2 The Protestant Ethic and 'The Beautiful Soul'

In short, Milbank's shortcomings represent the limitations Rose identifies with Protestant ethics: the 'cosmopolitan idea of freedom [Christianity] cannot re-affirm the freedom of the *polis*, for it no longer recognises ethical life as divine, as triune, but rejects it as corrupt and remains in the agony, the passion, of religious and political dualism [...]'.⁸⁶ This duality between 'religious separation and political domination,' implies that 'posited communal love translates into social violence of individuals'⁸⁷ as a result of the

⁸³ See R. D. Williams, 'Saving Time: Thoughts on Practice, Patience, and Vision', *New Blackfriars* 73, 319-26; G. Loughlin, 'Christianity at the End of the Story or the Return of the Master Narrative', *Modern Theology* 8 (1992), 365-84; W. J. Hankey, *Re-Christianising Augustine Postmodern Style*, §§ 71-2.

⁸⁴ See W. J. Hankey, § 54. See also, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ R. D. Williams, 'Between Politics and Metaphysics', p. 19.

⁸⁶ HCS, p. 116.

⁸⁷ TBM, p. 156.

'unintended psychological and political consequences of Protestant inwardness and worldly asceticism'.⁸⁸ The 'unintended consequences of the Protestant ethic' that results in worldly asceticism is investigated by Max Weber and explored by Goethe and Hegel. Here Weber and Hegel follow and each independently explore Goethe's illustration of how the ethic of worldly asceticism in the Protestant ethic compares with the image of 'the beautiful soul', other-worldly asceticism:

"the beautiful soul" [...] captures the impotence that results from excessive religious zeal, which opposes the world in the name of an inner, individual Protestantism, or, collectively, in the name of the brethren of the common life – a pre-Reformation community [...] adopted in the eighteenth century by Pietist communities, especially the community of Herrnhut, led by Count Zinzendorf, to which Goethe refers by name in his novel in connection with "the beautiful soul".⁸⁹

The commonality Rose identifies between these thinkers – along with whom she also includes Walter Benjamin because he similarly talks about the 'unintended consequences' of Protestant inwardness and worldly asceticism⁹⁰ – draws to the surface eighteenth-century German Pietism and its reaction to bourgeois legality 'with its excessively autonomous individuality [and] 'the remnants of the aristocratic ethic'.⁹¹ This reaction produces an extreme asceticism – 'more emotional inwardly, and organised outwardly to render "the invisible Church of the elect visible on this earth"' – which Goethe and Hegel in particular see as a representation of 'the beautiful soul': 'intelligent, bookish and intense, she mourns a world which she cannot and will not join'.⁹² This result for the spiritual life reassures and soothes, rather than 'arousing restlessness',⁹³ 'a vocation which may demonstrate but which may never *earn* individual salvation [...]':⁹⁴

Transfiguration of anguish, which occurred in Luther's own case after twenty years of fear and trembling and of spiritual and scholarly discipline, is universalised by Protestantism so that it is made available for all – without any "one" undergoing the intensity of Luther's testing. [In which case] as a reformer,

⁸⁸ JM, pp. 179-80.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 178. See also, M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. T. Parsons (London: Unwin, 1968), pp. 180-1, 240-2; POS, §§ 632-668.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 179ff.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 180.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ TBM, p. 157.

⁹⁴ JM, p. 179.

he fought to “throw off burdens” of too many kinds, [...] which takes Luther in vain and nullifies his contribution.⁹⁵

Conversely, for the relentless observer of his own inner and outer spiritual life, he submits to the anxiety of beginning and equivocation of the middle – ‘restlessness that yet remains with both dangers’.⁹⁶ That is, he remains with the options of either being outside civil society or moving into civil society. It is the only way to ‘avoid the spiritual, social and political inversions which attend any alleviation’.⁹⁷ Protestant ethics attends to spiritual mitigation, and in doing so, ‘debases both passion and action, so that the response to distinctions, especially to one’s distinction from oneself as abstraction, is to retreat into *ressentiment* – resentfulness towards the actuality of the pain of differences [...]’.⁹⁸ The opposite of this retreat is the passion to recognise these differences with the action aiding ‘others to recognise them. Such action and passion is what is meant by [...] witness’.⁹⁹ Goethe’s depiction of ‘the beautiful soul’, which Hegel borrows for his pivotal section on the path of objective spirit,¹⁰⁰ is one that is incapable of witness – she prefers the comfort and security offered by her resentfulness.¹⁰¹

Overall, Rose intends to expose abstract universalism represented in ‘the beautiful soul’ of the Protestant universal and the individual as fiction and their hidden facetiousness, in order to usurp the tendency of Enlightenment fictions, for example, to ‘reconcile and posit the unity of universal and particular’.¹⁰² By doing so, she insists upon maintaining the tension in what she calls the ‘aporia of the universal’ – aporetic universalism, and prevent it from succumbing to another danger: from ‘representing the agape of the singular, the inwardly piteous, outwardly pitiless individual [...]’.¹⁰³ *Aporia* and *agape* are marks of ‘the double danger’, that is, if we recall, they yield two kinds of

⁹⁵ TBM, pp. 157-8.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 159. The possibility of releasing violence into politics through Kierkegaard’s suspension of the ethical, and taking this with the exposition of Luther’s politics found in Kierkegaard’s *Journals*, enables Rose to define her notion of ‘the double danger’: ‘what it is to succumb either to worldly or to otherworldly authority.’ See *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 159.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 162.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ See POS, §§ 632-671. See particularly, § 668.

¹⁰¹ JM, p. 178.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

danger of what it is to succumb either to worldly or to otherworldly authority.¹⁰⁴ An agapic response only, on the other hand, (a love ethic which authenticates a love-community and denies the world) appears as an image of 'the beautiful soul'.¹⁰⁵ What this image of a beautiful soul and the marks of 'the double danger' allude to is the fundamental relation between the human and the divine. Given that earlier investigations on Weil addressed this relation, it would seem appropriate to elucidate the nature and reality of this soul, and indeed further elucidate Rose's understanding of this person, by drawing upon a correlation between Weil and 'the beautiful soul'.

7.6 *The 'Beautiful Soul' and the Supernatural*

The sense of isolation associated with 'the beautiful soul' is best exposed through Weil's enduring awareness of the tension of contradiction, that is, her 'pure self and the necessity of that self to externalise itself and change itself into an actual existence'.¹⁰⁶ This actual existence, Weil finds in her willingness to experience contradiction through manual work.¹⁰⁷ For 'such work', she says, 'puts man into direct contact with the inherent absurdity and contradiction of earthly life, and thus, if the worker does not lie, it enables him to touch heaven'.¹⁰⁸ Yet again, however, there is the familiar inter-play between the duality of the supernatural and the modern state, the universal and particular, good and evil prior to regaining the unity of life. Her intention is to affirm the immediacy of the contradiction, to assert that it is the 'criterion of the real'.¹⁰⁹ Rose's 'dubious angel', the angel of the broken middle, is content to hold 'to an identity with the consciousness it has repulsed'¹¹⁰ in order to create a vision of the unity of itself in the other.¹¹¹ Weil, on the other hand, is described by Rose as 'the angry angel',¹¹² who not only ties contradiction into unity with the union of opposites on a higher plane, but resolves that contradiction

¹⁰⁴ TBM, p. 156.

¹⁰⁵ See Rose's summary of how this degree of individuality and collectivity result from the 'refusal of anxiety of beginning and equivocation of the ethical.' Ibid., pp. 178-79.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See R. H. Bell, *Simone Weil: The Way of Justice as Compassion*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰⁸ GG, p. xxvii & 157-59.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹¹⁰ See JM, pp. 9-10.

¹¹¹ POS, § 668.

¹¹² JM, pp. 211ff.

through the Pythagorean notion that ‘the good is always defined by the union of opposites’.¹¹³

The result of Weil’s conflict between good and evil, ‘*attention and force*’¹¹⁴ is not just a relation to her violence against ‘idolatrous collectivities’¹¹⁵ – her demand that justice pertains to the profound and unchanging expectation that nothing is sacred other than the good and what ‘pertains to it’ for the individual¹¹⁶ – but also a reflection of her conflict of idolatry towards the good in so far as her dualistic theology dictates it. Her world is entirely predetermined from her ‘response to the cry provoked by the infliction of evil’, being that the only choice is ‘between supernatural good on the one hand and evil on the other’.¹¹⁷ There is no real mutuality between gravity and grace, for ‘grace comes down and makes for gravity’.¹¹⁸

Therefore, it can only be shown that Weil’s representation of the law cannot be one that is natural, but supernatural – it ‘belongs to the exposition of invisible justice [...]’.¹¹⁹ This can only imply the ‘supernature’ of justice according to Weil’s supernatural middle. The resistance to any mutuality between gravity and grace can only lead one to argue that her ‘judgement of modernity leaves the middle, the world, untouched supernaturally’.¹²⁰

Indeed, judgement and duality between the two worlds Weil came to inhabit, gave her no clear direction of how to explain the ‘perfect liberty’ of the individual living in a modern state. If one recalls from Chapter III, her conception of society was obsessed with the issue of power. It is in the race for power, the ‘force exerted by one person against another’ that ‘the whole of social life is governed by the struggle for power.’¹²¹ In *Oppression and Liberty* she finds no resolution of this issue, which is perhaps, one aspect in her thinking that sustained the tension and conflict between the individual and the state. Yet, conversely, Weil goes on to argue that the only hope of finding a balance in

¹¹³ GG, p. 91.

¹¹⁴ See JM, pp. 217-19.

¹¹⁵ See chapter IV of this thesis.

¹¹⁶ JM, p. 217. See also MILES, pp. 71-2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 217-18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 218.

¹¹⁹ JM, p. 218.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 221.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 71.

the modern state would be to establish a kind of 'perfect liberty',¹²² one which achieves a kind of equanimity of cooperation between individuals. But this cooperation, which Chapter III recognised as true liberty, was only possible if thought and action were in relationship with one another so that 'the least evil society is that in which the general run of men are most often obliged to think while acting, have the most opportunities for exercising control over collective life as a whole, and enjoy the greatest amount of independence'.¹²³ Yet, this ideal, which Weil recognises as a dilemma, is naturally the collision between good and evil, the natural and supernatural. Rose, on the other hand, considers that this will lead to an irresolvable, internal conflict as its unintended outcome:

The only possibility of salvation would lie in a methodical co-operation between all, strong and weak, with a view to accomplishing a progressive decentralisation of social life; but the absurdity of such an idea strikes one immediately. Such a form of co-operation is impossible to imagine, even in dreams, in a civilisation that is based on competition, on struggle, on war.¹²⁴

These supernatural ideas in *Oppression and Liberty* are fictional, given the time in which they were written. Yet, the ideas are given their supernatural power when Weil begins her treacherous journey of spirituality and mysticism, of despair – a 'dark night of the soul', to be graced and visited, to be totally fused with what she perceived as the truth of the suffering of Christ in Christianity. The idealism of Weil's political thought comes face to face with her soul-crushing spiritual experiences of Christ. Undoubtedly, there can be no coincidence between the difficulty of power and the struggle to resolve the reality of oppression she wrote about in *Oppression and Liberty*, and the intense revelations of Christ that came to consume her. Weil's description of the modern state, as 'the inevitable extension and specialisation of the means of domination, [...] according to which both master and slave are equally beholden to force',¹²⁵ becomes a matter of reality for Weil when she 'received the mark of a slave' – the realisation of regarding herself as a slave.¹²⁶

¹²² Ibid., p. 84.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 103. For a critical account of how Weil ignores the importance of community, and the sense in which individual independence flourishes, see M. G. Dietz, *Between the Human and the Divine: The Political Thought of Simone Weil*.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

¹²⁵ JM, pp. 220-21.

¹²⁶ WG, p. 66.

As she identified contradiction in the modern state, the difficulty of finding a resolution of the struggle for power, to establish a less than perfect liberty in co-operation between individuals and for individual freedom,¹²⁷ it was her spiritual experiences, particularly her factory work, that identified for her the mark of slavery and the destruction of liberty.¹²⁸ Weil, however, came to exaggerate its meaning when she wrote that 'you are so totally at the command of other human beings, that you have no control over your situation'.¹²⁹ With no outside attention to your cries and pains, the mark of a slave took on the condition of what Weil defined, 'affliction'. The concept of 'oppression' is replaced by the experience of 'affliction'.¹³⁰ What is more important, however, is how the supernatural is not just a middle divorced from the natural, but how it, in fact, becomes a 'holy middle', one that attempts to heal the *brokenness* of the middle. In Weil's case, it emerges through the suffering of Christ. Her intense revelations of Christianity led her to the conviction that 'Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of slaves, that slaves cannot help belonging to it, and I among others'.¹³¹ The suffering of Christ, who bore the marks of affliction, enabled Weil to establish a physical connection between the natural and supernatural, that is, 'the extreme greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy for suffering but a supernatural use for it'.¹³² As 'affliction causes God to be absent for a time',¹³³ so 'there must be a feeling of separation from God such as Christ experienced. We must attain to the knowledge of a still fuller reality in suffering which is a nothingness and a void'.¹³⁴ Part of the experience of this sort of reality originates in the journey of decreation.

With a discussion of Weil's experience of the supernatural in the final chapter, we can, nevertheless, recognise in the aftermath of decreation that she was faced with two irresolvable conflicts. Firstly, she was persistent with her attempts to resolve rather than *suspend* and *equivocate* the struggle of power, the issue of 'oppression', because the

¹²⁷ OL, pp. 84-5.

¹²⁸ See SL, pp. 14-23, P., 214-47.

¹²⁹ R. H. Bell, p. 27.

¹³⁰ Richard Bell makes a similar point though he attempts to enlarge upon the idea of Weil as 'the mark of a slave' in order to find a link between Weil's moral and political philosophy. See *ibid.*, pp. 27-32. See also, GG, pp. 72-6.

¹³¹ WG, p. 34.

¹³² GG, p. 73.

¹³³ SNL, p. 172.

¹³⁴ GG, pp. 75-6.

force of the supernatural entices her thinking to deny the third which by its existence, gives meaning to 'the double danger'. In this case, she is unable to 'explore this diremption [suspension of the ethical] in the experience of the individual, and to explore the effect of each dirempted sphere in the realm of its contrary'.¹³⁵ Thus,

if the dirempted terms of the ethical are set in opposition to each other, so that "love" – friendly, saintly, aporetic, political – is opposed to "the law" – the world, the city of man – and made into an unworldly culture – a city of God – this holy city will be infected with the same judgemental banality of opinion about good and evil it would repulse.¹³⁶

Secondly, if Weil's 'holy city' is infected with the negative characterisation of her Spiritual Other, namely, 'the same judgemental banality of opinion about good and evil,' this can only imply that the reality of suffering and affliction in a 'holy city' is equally bound up in irresolvable contention. Her persistence in institutionalising the supernatural, with suffering and affliction, as a 'holy middle', an attempt therefore to mend the broken middle of the modern state, leaves her disappointed that her supernatural has no place. It lacks any capacity for growth – struggling to breathe life into her spirituality. It is this reality, according to Joan Dargan, that means that she 'was someone not able to acknowledge any solidarity with the women factory workers, whose experience she knew well [...]. Her language was perhaps one place she was at home'¹³⁷ for it captures entirely her obsessive 'courting' with the supernatural. Having recognised Weil's obsession with the supernatural, and several key correlations between herself and the 'beautiful soul', it would only appear to be natural to understand how Rose works with and uses religious terms in which to express a rather different theological outlook to that of Simone Weil.

7.7 Authorships in 'The Double Danger'

Since we have identified up to this point authorships that fall into either fictions of abstract universalism of enlightenment or the rhetoric of universal Christian agape, the key to recognising Rose's idea of salvation would be to identify and establish the relation between the individual and the state in the broken middle. For Rose, the individual must

¹³⁵ TBM, p. 217.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 238.

¹³⁷ J. Dargan, *Simone Weil: Thinking Poetically*, pp. 17-18.

‘neither opt to abandon political universality, [...] nor to resolve its inconsistency and antinomy and any ethical immediacy of love’, but rather, remain within the agon of authorship that cultivates aporetic universalism.¹³⁸ To remain in this agon is to negotiate ‘the double danger’, and the authorships Rose identifies are the eighteenth and mid-twentieth century Jewish writers Rahel Varnhagen and Hannah Arendt respectively.¹³⁹ Both women witness the love community, its violence in love represented by ‘the beautiful soul’ as well as the local, legal and civil community. Varnhagen and Arendt are citizens that neither fix their ‘own isolation outside society, nor the many paths through civil society, into an absolute, but [knew] the relation between the aporiae – the difficult paths – and what is fixed or static – the state’.¹⁴⁰ Rather, they recognise that danger is double which in fact, ‘is the *only undangerous position*: the only one, literally, that does not liberate from one dominion [...] to submit to another’. Restlessness remains with both dangers.¹⁴¹ By not keeping this knowledge hidden, “‘confessions” became authorships’ and each person, not being reduced to one of these dangers, and therefore, not existing as ‘beautiful souls’, takes up the agon of this authorship.¹⁴² In doing so they cultivate ‘the dangers of both paths, skirting and moving through society’,¹⁴³ and avoiding any danger which is not double.

Varnhagen and Arendt hold to the ‘anxiety of beginning’ that does not rest with ‘any locality nor with any easy universality [Milbank], but which develops a reflection on the inversions and aporiae of both [...]’.¹⁴⁴ Though Arendt reduces Varnhagen to one of these dangers,¹⁴⁵ Rose turns this ‘reduction’ into a critique against Arendt, illustrating how she, failing to reserve the tension between private and public expression, cultivates a ‘temporary removal’ of the person out of this world and into the privacy of the their own mind.¹⁴⁶ Varnhagen, says Rose, is one ‘who acquires power, ‘not possessed by “the

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 155.

¹³⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 185-238.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 159.

¹⁴² Rahel Varnhagen, *née* Levin, takes on the agon of authorship which she preferred to live with rather than resolve. See *ibid.*, pp. 186-96 Such movements are also noted with Hannah Arendt, who also lived the ‘agon of articulation which refuses any “-ism” to cure their complaint.’ See *ibid.*, p. 185, 198-238

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 192-3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁴⁵ See H. Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman*, trans. R. Winston and C. Winston (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974).

¹⁴⁶ See TBM, pp. 223-36.

beautiful soul”, in order to ‘renounce knowledge of herself: for “the sharpest knowledge of myself” became the agon, “*la lutte* of my life”’.¹⁴⁷ Unlike Milbank, Varnhagen, sustained in the agon of authorship, does not ‘merely perpetuate and even accentuate the old’.¹⁴⁸ Arendt, in spite of Rose’s criticisms, still sustains and embraces dilemma as Rose’s citation of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* illustrates.¹⁴⁹ Briefly, Arendt passes through the dangers Varnhagen recognised by expressing the strain and activity of ‘the individual called into activity, singularly and collectively’, and bearing the contradiction as the author.¹⁵⁰ These citizens and their authorships move from ‘beautiful souls’ to ‘dubious angels’. Such angels are difficult souls who are living in the broken middle for they do not allow any phantasized middle term to take over the immediacy of the antithesis.¹⁵¹ Both women ‘witness at first hand the double difficulty (danger) of either being outside civil society or moving into civil society’.¹⁵²

The difficulty of the broken middle represented by ‘the double danger’ of aporia and agape embody unpredictable and unexpected moments of living, loving, to be failed, to forgive, to have failed, to be forgiven, for ever and ever.¹⁵³ To hold oneself in the difficulty of this work is transcendence. Love is this work which Rose’s autobiography, *Love’s Work*, illustrates. As the broken middle, it embodies life as an on-going, endless movement of the truth and loss of consciousness. This is salvation for Rose, and in the last chapter, where she and Weil are explored in the genesis of the search for salvation, the third, the middle of the triune structure of the broken middle is represented as Rose’s ‘third city, a ‘just city’ that non-dualistically welds together Jerusalem and Athens. The individual now hosts the broken middle within its own autobiography. This awakening to life begins an individual’s journey of salvation, and illuminates for us the search for its genesis. Even though Rose found her own personal salvation in Christianity, there is evidence in her last and incomplete work, *Paradiso*, that she had found a strong resemblance between her philosophical matrix of self-responsibility and the ancient world of Gnosticism. As earlier investigations into neo-gnosticism have attempted to

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁴⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁵³ LW, p. 98.

elucidate several concerns with Weil's religious and spiritual preoccupations, this same system of beliefs will now provide a basis in which to understand how Rose's broken middle is transformed from a metaphysical preoccupation to a practical concern in human affairs. This transformation is developed fully in the final chapter, the genesis of the search for salvation, but in the meantime, a correlation between Rose and fundamental Gnostic tenets will go some way to identifying her momentum to bridge two aspects – the supernatural and the natural – in one Reality.

7.8 *Rose: Personal Identity and Neo-Gnosticism*

Rose's preoccupation with reason invites interlocutors to participate in inner, spiritual experiences that draw attention to oneself through the famous dictum, 'knowing thyself'.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the interlocutor chooses a tortuous path because it discovers the contradictions of its own position. In this exchange, they as with Socrates draw back into their hearts in order to look at themselves, their true self.¹⁵⁵ This amounts to Arendt's argument that the individual withdraws temporarily away from the tension of the private and public into the privacy of its mind, a morally unambiguous place. But one wonders whether Rose's criticism of Arendt's thinking here in *The Broken Middle* is too harsh given that this private place represents a *temporary* moment of thought in which we recognise our unforeseen conclusions.¹⁵⁶ This, perhaps, relates to the moment in which Rose as with other women accounted for in the broken middle are willing to pass unnoticed. That is to say, they cultivate this hidden, invisible reality in which to sustain their visible reality in the contradiction of experience and the experience of contradiction. The juxtaposition of the visible reality with an awareness of the hidden, invisible reality

¹⁵⁴ Similarly through Socratic dialogue, a self-examination of Socrates' soul meant that 'I should prefer to be as I am, neither wise in their wisdom nor foolish in their folly, or to be in both respects as they are. I replied then to myself and to the oracle that it was better for me to be as I am'. Plato, *Apology*, 22E, trans. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 61-145. Socrates' reference to the Oracle is analogous to Critias' notation in the *Charmides* of the inscription on the temple at Delphi, namely, *γνωθι σεαυτόν*. Plato, *Charmides*, 164D, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (London: William Heinemann, 1930), pp. 1-91. To 'know thyself', according to the Oracle of Delphi, is an expression of the totality of human wisdom, and necessary in order to attain *genuine* self-knowledge. Therefore, self-reflection, or being oneself, is an end in itself rather than a means whereby knowledge of the external world of things is alienated from the self and seen to be an end to all thought. See LP, pp.190-194.

¹⁵⁵ See P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 147-178.

¹⁵⁶ See H. Arendt, *Thinking*, vol. 1, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 192-3. See also, A. Nye, *Philosophia*, pp. 205-08.

is the basic neo-gnostic motif discussed in Chapter IV. For Rose, however, to sustain a visible presence with her growing religious and spiritual preoccupations came with some difficulty and tension towards the end of her life.

In fact, Rose's conversion to Christianity on her deathbed was by far the mirror of her spiritual hiddenness in public life given that she publicly declared her consolation in the world of philosophical reflection. As Martin Jay once remarked, 'Rose's religious conversion came as a thunderbolt to the public at large, as well as to many of her closest friends'.¹⁵⁷ Yet, at the time in which she slipped away from this world, she was baptised in the Anglican Church by the Right Reverend Simon Barrington-Ward, the former Bishop of Coventry. Ultimately, she had proven that her life's work in philosophical critique had proven inadequate to her spiritual needs, which meant that five days after she was buried, Rose's obituary concluded that 'she died reconciled to her family, to God and to her own cruel fate'.¹⁵⁸ What is interesting to address is how this perception of Rose's reconciliation is the summit in which neo-gnostic soteriology attempts to bring the human soul into union with the divine. What is of further interest is the difficulty and tension that takes place along the road to this re-union and Rose was by no means an exception. In fact, it would oppose the basic foundations of her broken middle. Even though, however, Jay suggests that her earlier consolation in philosophy became inadequate for her later spiritual needs, but what he has, perhaps, overlooked is how the nature of Rose's philosophical concerns from within the heart of Hegelian speculative philosophy were instrumental to identifying, in the first place, her spiritual roots towards the end of her life. Indeed, what goes some way to understanding Rose's sudden conversion has to do with the way in which her philosophical speculation of the dilemmas of modern life were powerfully reflective within the dilemmas of her own identity.

In that case, what unfolds at the heart of her spiritual needs has to do with the nature of her philosophical ideas in as much as the struggle of her own identity. With regards to the latter, the publication of *The Broken Middle* (1992) and *Judaism and Modernity* (1993) suggest that Rose had firmly returned to the comfort of her Jewish roots.¹⁵⁹ This could not be further from the truth for Simone Weil, who, as earlier

¹⁵⁷ Martin Jay, 'The Conversion of the Rose', 41-52 (p. 42).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

discussions have suggested, displayed a broader caution against institutional religions and their religious doctrines that separated rather than united people of different social, political and religious backgrounds. Nevertheless, the struggle of Rose's sense of identity leads the reader to recognise how her world of speculative philosophy from earlier writings had led to her religious preoccupations with Judaism, though not being concerned with 'the sublime Other of modernity',¹⁶⁰ but rather, Judaic thought expressing the dilemmas of modern life. Engaged in dialogue with several Jewish scholars at the time,¹⁶¹ Rose finally entered the 'international world of Jewish philosophy', where, in 1993 for example, she was invited to advise the Polish Commission on the future of Auschwitz as a representative 'Jewish intellectual'.¹⁶² But in the knowledge that she converted to Christianity on her deathbed, one is now faced with an unexpected change of identity whereby her conversion to Christianity would leave behind her Jewish roots forever. Nevertheless, this was not the first occasion that she underwent such a radical shift in identity. When she was sixteen, she reveals in her autobiography, *Love's Work*, that she changed her patronym from 'Stone', (Father's name) to 'Rose', (her Stepfather's). Calling it a 'violent act of self-assertion', this triumph was followed by the loss of her biological father who angrily disowned her, refusing to see her for five years. Not too long after, her mother and stepfather divorced, which meant that she relived the pain and suffering of her parent's divorce. Having come to recognise that not even a name change alone can guarantee the healing of diremptions, her second identity shift may have been, as Jay argues, 'an attempt to mend the rift created by the first'.¹⁶³

This yearning for reparation and reconciliation goes along way to explain the direction of Rose's religious and spiritual journey, 'for although she identified "Rose" with a daughter's obedience to the Jewish law, she soon came to see it as representing the grace that softens the hardness of the legal "Stone"'.¹⁶⁴ What this suggests, however, and this takes the discussion back to her obituary on reconciliation, Rose did indeed recognise through all the horrors of human life the possibility of reconciliation, but her sense of

¹⁶⁰ JM, p. x.

¹⁶¹ Such examples include Paul Mendes-Flohr, Alan Udoff and Norman Solomon. See Martin Jay, 'The Conversion of the Rose', p. 42.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

union in contradictory experience what embodied by her 'capacity to forgive, the strength to transcend melancholy, "the power of love, which may curse, but abides [...] a power to be able to *attend*, powerful or powerless"'.¹⁶⁵

For Rose, this act of reconciliation, which she expressed through her religious conversion, attempts to shine through in her last, incomplete text, *Paradiso*. Her sense of reparation and reunion, unnoticed and hidden, and confined to private life is part of her dilemma with personal identity, speculative philosophy, and her religious journey of coming to know herself. To know thyself, she says, 'is the ancient Greek motto, [which] still provides the call for the exercise of reason to fathom the irrational',¹⁶⁶ to 'fuel our inner self-relation'.¹⁶⁷ This call interesting corresponds to neo-gnostic thought and the unification of the cosmos and the individual discussed earlier.¹⁶⁸ This kind of thought, for Rose, helps to exercise reason against 'the dualisms, which modernity has reinvented, between the body and the soul, matter and spirit, nature and culture'.¹⁶⁹ Her striking affiliation with Gnostic thinking is also associated with the idea of invisibility, that neo-gnosticism preserves the invisibility of the soul: 'let us leave this soul hidden'.¹⁷⁰ Both Rose along with a lifetime friend and companion, Edna, are keen to sustain their presence in this sort of reality. The point that Gnosis requires 'self-mastery' is to ascent along a theosophical chain towards immortality, which as salvation, 'is acquired only by means of terribly hard inner work and struggle'.¹⁷¹ Through the hard work of love, the 'roaring and roasting of self-relation', the uncertainty of self, to not cease wooing and to stay in the fray, leads to that stage of complete vulnerability in Rose. Here, she finds herself in the heart of the broken middle:

The withdrawal of the abyss, the overwhelming plenitude of every moment, leaves me more vulnerable than the busy tumult of distress: I have nothing to clutch, nothing to point to as my burden, nothing from which to beg alleviation. My soul is naked: it has lost its scaffolding of regret and remorse or even repentance: it is turned: and the unexpected result is the sensation and the envelope of invisible and visible beauty.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ LW, p. 126.

¹⁶⁶ PA, p. 26. For Rose's comments on Gnosticism, see PA, pp. 25-6.

¹⁶⁷ LW, p. 127.

¹⁶⁸ J. J. Hurtak, *Gnosticism: Mystery of Mysteries*, p. 58.

¹⁶⁹ PA, p. 26.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-1.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.

Even though one cannot doubt that Rose found religious comfort in the Anglican tradition, there is no doubting from the *Paradiso* that she reached the depths of her own hell, but managed simultaneously, to find a sense of purpose and justification with this darkness for the fruition of a larger and more compelling good.

I have only attempted to take some of the very basic tenets of Gnostic thought and compared them, in principle, to aspects of Rose's life in order to explain her own brief exposition of Gnosticism in her final works. What this section has attempted primarily to establish is her experience of the broken middle. In addition to Weil's void, both will feature in the final chapter on the genesis of the search for salvation. This investigation aims to explore how it is that a person lives in, with and through the contradiction of human life. Whilst the next section will explore these themes, the point that has to be emphasised here is how Weil found a sense of union between the human and divine outside of the material world, and Rose found that same union within material reality. The next chapter attempts to understand which approach is more conducive to the genesis of the search for salvation.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a 'systematic' presentation of Rose's broken middle in order to bring us closer to the genesis of salvation. It is a movement of the human condition which, in conjunction with Weil's idea of the void, is initially impersonal and conceptual, but gradually becomes personal, autobiographical, indeed the fabric of love and life. Within a conceptual framework, I have attempted to provide a presentation of the broken middle with all its risks through Rose's gnomic configurations:¹⁷³ 'the anxiety of beginning, the equivocation of the ethical and the agon of authorship'. With the mediation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Kierkegaard's pseudonymous entities, these configurations highlight a very important distinction within thought. One finds that thought struggles to maintain the recognition that thinking has already begun, which explains why Rose is insistent upon more illusion,

¹⁷³ See R. D. Williams, 'Between Politics and Metaphysics', p. 11.

‘not less, [...] to eject “the single one” pseudonymously addressed from further refuge in thought’.¹⁷⁴ This is because thinking tends to look for a beginning that is safe, predictable – ‘a beginning that already controls or contains its goal’.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms bring forward the realisation that our concepts and thoughts, with all their beginnings, are relentlessly associated with an uncomfortable and unpredictable middle that is broken. Actuality in his text, *Repetition*, ‘is best described by the term, “repetition” which understands that the work of knowing is both a repetition of mediation and the presence of a third, for which the repetition is something new’.¹⁷⁶ Without repetition, Kierkegaard argues, actuality cannot come into existence and we are left instead, with the ‘empty meaningless noise’ of mediation.¹⁷⁷

Rose’s configurations through Kierkegaard and Hegel highlight the reality of the broken middle. It explains why she begins the preface to *The Broken Middle* with, ‘what has been witnessed is the *pathos of the concept*’.¹⁷⁸ Her intention is to reconfigure the distortion that what we know is also what we do not know in order that we continue willingly always to learn and grow. The nature of the beloved against her lover and his confidant, in Kierkegaard’s *Repetition*,¹⁷⁹ emphasise the break from ideality, and the embodiment of both the hard work of love and the ‘passion of ferocious sincerity’ of Rose’s autobiography. This has been explored to some degree through key aspects of Rose’s identity and affiliation with Gnosticism, but the final chapter of this thesis intends to develop this further. In the meantime, the predicament of modernity, the diremption between law and ethics, repeats itself in the thought of post-modernity. I began with post-modern political theology, particularly Milbank, in order to indicate the continuing problem of their control over beginnings and their avoidance of the middle. The broken middle is overcome with the development of ‘holy middles’ in its place, which attempt, but fail, to mend the diremption between law and ethics.

Individuals within this type of society are ‘left poised unhappily between an external order which, because it has forgotten what failure is, ceases to be a source of

¹⁷⁴ TBM, p. 10.

¹⁷⁵ R. D. Williams, ‘Between Politics and Metaphysics’, p. 11.

¹⁷⁶ N. Tubbs, ‘Mind the Gap: The Philosophy of Gillian Rose’, p. 54.

¹⁷⁷ S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, Repetition*, trans. H. V. Hong & E. H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 149.

¹⁷⁸ TBM, p. 308.

¹⁷⁹ See S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, Repetition*, pp: 131-74. See TBM, pp. 19-24.

power, and an internal critical self-perception, an anxious self-perception, that likewise has no access to power, no resolution of its own impotence'.¹⁸⁰ This is the reality of 'the beautiful soul' and the problematic of Protestant piety, an order that has forgotten how to fail, 'a system that guarantees successful performance'.¹⁸¹ With the possibility of failure set against the determination of the ethical, 'recognising that the action we inaugurate is not in advance specified as successful'¹⁸² and formal, we open up to the inclusion of violence, which is love – life – that lives. Thinking and acting according to these tensions allows a person to resist the menacing pull towards false reconciliations, which we find with holy middles, and therefore, utopian universalism in post-modern thought.

Rose's Jewish women that avoid this menacing pull witness 'the temptations of the reflective consciousness in the modern age – the withdrawal into the private cultivation of a "beautiful soul"' that lure social transformation away from their '*political* task', that is, away from 'continually self-adjusting, self-criticising [speculative] practice and towards a return to identity'.¹⁸³ This contrast between the soul that 'witnesses' and the soul that remains 'beautiful', and in short, 'victimised', constitutes our quest for the genesis of the search for salvation in the next chapter. As part of this exploration, the investigation needs to reflect upon the way each soul relates to and within itself and in social and political institutions, and how this relation, indeed conflict, between the individual and the state indicates one way or another the positive and negative value of living with, in and through contradiction in human life.

¹⁸⁰ R. D. Williams, p. 12.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

PART IV

‘THE GENESIS OF THE SEARCH FOR SALVATION’

Chapter VIII: Salvation: The ‘Movement’ of Spirit

[...] A “beautiful soul”, does not have the power to possess the power to renounce the knowledge of itself which it keeps to itself, it cannot attain to an identity with the consciousness it has repulsed, nor therefore to a vision of the unity of itself in the other, cannot attain to an objective existence. Consequently, the identity comes about only negatively, as a being devoid of Spirit. The “beautiful soul”, lacking an actual existence, entangled in the contradiction between its pure self and the necessity of that self to externalise itself and change itself into an actual existence – [...] the middle term reconciling the antithesis, which has been intensified to its pure abstraction, and is pure being or empty nothingness – this “beautiful soul”, then, being conscious of this contradiction [...] is disordered to the point of madness, wastes itself in yearning and pines away in consumption. [...] What it brings forth is only the non-spiritual unity of [mere] being.¹

8.1 *Introduction*

These conceptual and experiential evaluations of Simone Weil and Gillian Rose have enabled this thesis to explore their encounters with contradiction, and in particular, observe their sense of identity in relation to and within it. As the themes of salvation to be discussed are closely tied to the tenets of contradiction addressed in and by both women, it is now important to turn to an account of how salvation is possible through these two (different) forms of mediation of thought and experience. If one recalls, the key towards approaching salvation, and the origin of its search, is to consider how to live in, with and through contradiction without attempting (as Rose would say) to reconfigure the way in which it presents itself in thought (the triune structure of the broken middle) and experience (working the difficulty and struggle of negativity). Our inquiries, therefore, also attempt to illustrate how they existentially commit themselves to ‘knowing thyself’

¹ POS, § 668.

(the spirituality of contradiction)² through their encounters in contradictory experience. In addition, they show us the way in which this commitment to 'know thyself' is worked through the mediation and balance between the inner and outer reality of the individual.

The aim of this chapter, the final section that ties together Weil and Rose, the void and the broken middle, is to identify, investigate and extrapolate the human condition that is orientated towards the genesis of the search for salvation. The similarity between Rose and Weil is their endless determination to bind their souls so 'dangerously' to the grave of the *polis*. With Rose, this begins to emerge with her 'third city', a 'just city' that is broken, weaving together 'Athens' and 'Jerusalem', reason and revelation, individuality and collectivity. She avoids replacing 'old Athens' with 'New Jerusalem' or proceeding to establish a 'new city' that comprises the current legacy of the modern era in which 'Jerusalem' dominates and suppresses. Rather she 'sticks' with the traumas and difficulties of reason. Likewise, her Jewish 'witnesses', Arendt and Varnhagen that host the broken middle, fuel their inner self-relation and return us to difficulty. They take the risks of reason, which post-modernity fails to embody, and will the experience of the 'discomforts of love'.³

Possessed without the '*sureness of self*', that is, 'being bounded and unbounded, selved and unselved, "sure" of this untiring exercise',⁴ these women and Rose in her autobiography, are ready to be unsure. This is not love of suffering, but the work, the power of love, which may curse, but abides. It is power to be able to *attend*, powerful or powerless.⁵ This act of love is Rose's work, the journey towards salvation. As she restores the pathos of the concept to its logos in *The Broken Middle*, salvation here is ultimately the restoration of the pathos of the soul to its logos through the mediation of our inner self-relation: 'to keep this work in the middle, yet to risk comprehension of the broken middle, means returning beginnings to their middle and middles to their

² If we recall from 'Part I' of this thesis, the spirituality of contradiction as a way of knowing thyself, refers to the way in which the tension and conflict within contradictory experience that makes us attentive towards self-transformation and self-discovery, leads to the self-recovery of a more authentic, real sense of self. By this, I mean a sense of balance and mediation within the entire reality – inner and outer – of the individual of experience. See chapter I of this thesis.

³ LW, p. 111.

⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 125-6.

beginnings incessantly'.⁶ The facetiousness of this presentation yields the pathos of the concept 'or the self-relation which is love's work'.⁷ But before we begin with this work, there are words of caution Rose articulates for our survival through the negativity of the broken middle:

Are you willing to suspend your prejudices and judgement? Are you willing to confront and essay a vitality that overflows the bumble mix of average well-being and ill-being [...]. For what people now seems to find most daunting with me, I discover, is not my illness or possible death, but my accentuated being; not my morbidity, but my renewed vitality.⁸

In this way, I explore how she embraces a deep sense of responsibility towards her life, struggling tirelessly to cultivate experiences that express her inner *gnosis*,⁹ her 'absolute power as well as absolute vulnerability'.¹⁰ Her baptism in Christ is perhaps her final surrender to this gnosis. This realisation figures at a deeper level of reality for Rose which, in criticism of Simone Weil, represents the ability of a person to pass unnoticed, to be ordinary in their appearance. The mediation here between the inner and outer individual is in contradiction, but at the same time, this balance as the only 'undangerous position' qualifies the idea of 'knowing thyself'. The honesty of Rose's life and the *Paradiso*, embody her awakening to a deep presence of God in salvation. To 'know thyself' one becomes a witness (the dubious angel) rather than a victim (the beautiful soul) of the dilemma of the human condition in and through contradiction. This movement, and Rose's baptism, place her at the heart of the broken middle.

With regards to Simone Weil, she will continue to be seen as the emblem of Goethe's 'the beautiful soul' – in the majority of cases she is a victim of rather than a witness to the reflective consciousness of the modern age. To consider Weil as this soul,

⁶ TBM, p. 309.

⁷ N. Tubbs, 'What is Love's Work?', p. 44.

⁸ LW, p. 72.

⁹ The term, 'Gnosis' as self-knowledge or 'knowing thyself', Rose connects with the Broken middle through the necessary traumas of reason. She says, "'know thyself", the ancient Greek motto, still provides the call for the exercise of reason to fathom the irrational [...]'. As with Gnostic thought, Rose argues that 'we need only to overcome ignorance, we are not beset by sin; that knowledge will empower us'. In short, Gnosticism says Rose, 'is as compelling today as it was in the second century AD'. See PA, p. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

the investigation initially discusses Kierkegaard's idea of 'repetition' – the actuality of existence – which is the presence of a third in the triune structure of the broken middle as something new. This presence and structure expounds upon the imagery of the Lover, Beloved and Confidant in order to observe the individual in its own contradictory self-relation, the broken middle. The significance of repetition he outlines in *Either/Or* as the difficulty and uncertainty of the subjective consciousness of the 'self', which is mentioned in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, for Kierkegaard here, the Beloved (his 'knight of faith') attempts to will 'repetition' which returns to experience the finite new as a movement forwards. The Lover, conversely, symbolises the idea of 'recollection', resignation to loss, which represents a 'movement backwards' ('knight of resignation').¹¹ The Confidant characterises the struggle between and within the Lover and Beloved in the broken middle.

This triadic relationship will help to elucidate Weil's struggles with the reality of contradiction, which from an earlier discussion of the disparate parts of her soul, identified through a reading of Gnostic soteriology, continues to be explored with her as 'the beautiful soul'. The 'void' which expresses the on-going expansion of consciousness into a multi-dimensional perception of the human condition in the world, in the end turns against her in relation to Rose's broken middle. Weil's experience of the void is more to do with her dilemma in the broken middle, i.e. the broken middle of the void. This idea overlaps with Rose's critique of Weil's yearning for metaphysical and ethical 'purity', (her ideality of a Utopian world), and how Weil as the 'angry angel' elucidates Rose's judgement that she fails to pass unnoticed in the most natural of situations and experiences.¹² In the meantime, however, there is a need initially to consider Rose's 'third city', her city of salvation in which she as with her Jewish witnesses, observe the relation of the individual to and within the state in order to clearly identify a person's contradictory self-relation.

¹¹ TBM, pp. 102-3. See also, S. Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, pp. 135-55.

¹² See JM, pp. 211-23.

8.2 *Rose and Salvation in 'The Third City'*

8.2.1 The Broken Middle of the City

The difficulty of 'the double danger', which is discussed at length in the previous chapter through Hannah Arendt and Rahel Varnhagen, is represented in the form of Rose's 'third city', a 'just city' that is broken, not based on the abandonment of reason (the despair of post-modernity), but on the success of reason that has failed as a result of the 'degraded power and exalted ethics, Athens and Jerusalem'.¹³ The genesis of this city presupposes the abandonment of the 'city of Athens' with its inhabitants setting off 'on a pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem, the imaginary community, where they seek to dedicate themselves to difference, to otherness, to love – to a new ethics which [...] overcomes the old Athens'.¹⁴ 'The third city' arises with the question that Rose poses to this community, which concerns the issue of balance between the inner and outer reality of the individual, that is, the individual's contradictory self-relation. What if, she says, within their souls, the inhabitants of New Jerusalem carried 'the city that separates each individual into a private, autonomous person, a bounded ego, and a phantasy life of community, a life of unbounded mutuality, (Simone Weil), a life without separation and its inevitable anxieties?' This becomes the unintended outcome of contradiction, as with Protestant piety, for the substitution of New Jerusalem that dismisses the domination of critical reason and its authority. Arendt and Varnhagen, as with Rose, avoid this unintended consequence, and rather, represent the figure of Phocion's wife living in 'the third city'.¹⁵

Indicated by her virtue of modesty and simplicity, Phocion's wife gathers up the ashes of her husband, killed under the tyranny of Athens, for consecration: 'Phocion's condemnation and manner of dying were the result of tyranny temporarily usurping good rule in the city'.¹⁶ Taking his ashes to her home, she 'buries them by the hearth, dedicating them to the household gods' in order to prevent his soul from wandering

¹³ MBL, p. 11, 15-39.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁵ The seventeenth century French artist Nicholas Poussin, depicts Phocion's wife in a portrait called *Gathering the Ashes of Phocion*. The source of this painting comes from Plutarch's *Life of Phocion*. See *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

¹⁶ Ibid.

forever.¹⁷ The classical representation here, akin to the nature of post-modern thinking, is to replace the tyranny of the city of Athens by an act of perfect love – as Jerusalem. ‘All boundaries of knowledge and power, of soul and city, amount to illegitimate force, and are to be surpassed by the new ethics of unbounded community’.¹⁸ The division between pure, individual love and the impure injustice of the world is the suppression of the other, which installs repetitive dualisms of power and otherness within the protest against power.¹⁹ What Rose attempts to demonstrate is the *politics* of Phocion’s wife, that is, the tension, risk and contradiction of political defiance against ‘the specific act of injustice perpetrated by the current representatives of the city’.²⁰ In this way, her defiance is not just about an act of infinite love but a finite act of political justice.²¹ In short, Rose attempts to illustrate as with ‘New Jerusalem’ that opposing ‘impure injustice of the world’ with ‘the act of redeeming love’ obliterates the tension and contradiction of the portrait. The gathering of the ashes is a protest against ‘arbitrary power’ and not against the reality of ‘power and law as such’.²² In which case, the diremption between power and exclusion, Athens and Jerusalem, leads to a denial of ‘the third which gives meaning to both – [...] *the third city*’.²³

8.2.2 The Mourning of Phocion’s Wife

Phocion’s wife commits a simultaneous act of infinite love and of political justice in this ‘just city’ in which she avoids all dualistic relations to ‘the other’, to ‘the world’ and rather than quieten and deny the broken middle, the third term, she comes to recognise the misrecognition of work, of her self-relation ‘mediated by the self-relation of the other’, which arises out of this third.²⁴ Phocion’s wife, in that case, is an entity actualised in the broken middle, in which law is not ‘sheer violence’, but positive in the sense that it

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

²¹ Ibid., p. 25.

²² Ibid., p. 26.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

decrees the presence of the other, which allows her to return from ‘devastating inner grief to the law of the everyday and of relationships, old and new’.²⁵ It allows her in other words, to return to ‘work’, that is, to ‘exploring the legacy of ambivalence’ and equivocation, ‘working through the contradictory emotions aroused by bereavement’.²⁶ Without this exploration, there can be no work. Phocion’s ashes, in that case, would be incorporated into the soul of his wife because she would be unable to mourn where there is no work, no contradiction and tension of emotions. This, Rose describes as *aberrated* mourning – abandonment and catastrophic loss. But given that Phocion’s wife embraces ‘the double danger’ of being outside and moving inside civil society, she can complete her mourning – *inaugurated* mourning.²⁷ This kind of mourning, is the object of knowing, by what we do not know or cannot speak of.²⁸ It is the recognition of our failures in the legacy of ambivalence, and for Rose, it bears the fruits of forgiveness because it issues in silence:²⁹ ‘her [Phocion’s wife] visible apprehension protects the complete vulnerability of her mourning’.³⁰ Her soul, protected by her visible apprehension of this civil injustice, is empowered given that it is able to complete its mourning and return to the political order.

Phocion’s wife alludes, in short, through her ‘inaugurated’ mourning, to the idea of knowing thyself. This idea is the sort of balance, in contradiction, between the inner and outer reality of the individual, which is to say, that her inner reality (the vulnerability of her mourning) is never what it appears to be in her outer reality (visible apprehension). It is why this balance through the mediation between the inner and outer as a result of recognising the danger as double, and therefore, charting an ‘undangerous position’, that Phocion’s wife does not liberate herself from one authority into the hands of another. She

²⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 12. For an account of the need to turn the fixed and the rigid into process and movement, to turn aberrated mourning into inaugurated mourning, see *ibid.*, pp. 63-76. The difference between ‘aberrated’ and ‘inaugurated’ mourning Rose sketches in her essay on Walter Benjamin, which says Rose, Benjamin is trapped in the former because existence is conceived as a sort of loss and fall, and grace is recognised as a metaphysical elsewhere. See JM, pp. 186-7, 209-10.

²⁸ See R. D. Williams, ‘Between Politic and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose’, note 31.

²⁹ JM, p. 209.

³⁰ MBL, p. 25.

rather remains hidden and unnoticed;³¹ the obvious sign that as ‘inaugurated’ mourning expounds a sense that what we do not know or what we are sworn to in silence, we are therefore, unable (like with Kierkegaard) to communicate directly in dialogue or conversation.

8.2.3 Love’s Work in ‘The Third City’

Phocion’s wife symbolise all these women, including Varnhagen and Arendt. They encounter the ‘third city’ without any form of exclusion from civil society. In the broken middle, they embody the reinvention of the political life of the community, and ‘carry out that intense work of the soul, that gradual rearrangement of its boundaries’ in order to be regained beyond the experience of sorrow, of justice and injustice.³² To be a victim of self-pity, to refuse the intrinsic relation of reality, is

to oppose new ethics to the old city, Jerusalem to Athens. To succumb to loss, to refuse to mourn, to cover persisting anxiety with the violence of a New Jerusalem masquerading as love.³³

Without the soul and without the city, we cannot help anyone.³⁴

What seems to be appropriate as an ending to the last four words of the quotation, ‘we cannot help anyone,’ is that we cannot even help ourselves. With these Jewish women, each ‘suffered, struggled, acted and died at the boundary wall of *the third city* [...] without retreating to any phantasy of the local or exclusive community: each staked the risks of identity without any security of identity’.³⁵ For Rose, this is the task of the religious journey,³⁶ that is to say, ‘the constant risk of positing and failing and positing again – “activity beyond activity”’³⁷ – endlessly reopens the way in which we learn, understand and comprehend ourselves and others. ‘It requires a *work*, a working through,

³¹ I intend to discuss this in further detail at a later stage in this chapter.

³² Ibid., pp. 35-6.

³³ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 104.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

that combination of self-knowledge and action [...]’ which initiates mourning and allows beginnings to be made in the middle.³⁸

The death of work echoes the fixity of any ideal and the manifestation of duality, whether in western metaphysics or in the pluralities and differences of post-modernism. A life of love and work, love’s work, the broken middle, is therefore, the movement of life. Rose’s autobiography, *Love’s Work*, is an account of her life – a life of considerable movement and progress. The passage of this journey is exceptional and unique because her life is a story of salvation in the ‘third city’. The risk of the broken middle announces itself in *The Broken Middle* as the aphorism, ‘that life must be risked in order to be gained; that only by discovering the limit of life – death – is “life” itself discovered’.³⁹ This risk is explored further in *Mourning Becomes the Law* when the soul and body as discussed above, belong to the *polis* in the manner of living and dying⁴⁰ – both indistinguishable from one another because life and death witness the middle, broken and aporetic. With the unity of life and death, living begins not with the elimination of the broken middle, but towards an acceptance of it. This is love and the work of love: the education of self-relation is love’s work.

In love man has found himself again in another. Since love is a unification of life, it presupposes division, a development of life, a developed many-sidedness of life. The more variegated the manifold in which life is alive, the more the places in which it can be reunified; the more the places in which it can sense itself, the deeper does love become.⁴¹

This depth of love moves us away from static, ideal notions that refrain us from the torched reality of what represents ‘the beautiful soul’ – one that fails to weave together Athens and Jerusalem, individuality and collectivity. The nature of this soul suffers from desertion and catastrophic loss – ‘aberrated’ mourning; it struggles to forgive, and rather than explore the legacy of suspension and equivocation, it remains in the realm of dualistic thinking, the opposition of good and evil so that the remains of the

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 121-22.

³⁹ TBM, p. 16.

⁴⁰ MBL, p. 102.

⁴¹ ETW, pp. 278-79.

dead are incorporated into its soul because it cannot mourn. Simone Weil cannot mourn because her 'erotic God-relationship' makes her 'unfit for the frivolity of court life'.⁴² It is at this stage that we now cross over to the triadic relationship of the Beloved, Lover and Confidant that allude to Kierkegaard's notion of 'repetition' as love's work, in order to explore further, the reality of 'the beautiful soul' and its struggle to embrace the third, the broken middle, as its own contradictory self-relation.

8.3 *The Beloved: Repetition and 'The Beautiful Soul'*

For the Beloved to will repetition, she has to firstly risk love's work through the withdrawal of the Lover. She 'says that she remains steadfast and consistent, unwavering in her love: the Lover is the inconsistent one. The Beloved says she is bewildered and deserted: the Lover appears indifferent equally to his withdrawal and to her bereavement'.⁴³ What is this agonising bereavement? 'The answer "loss" repeats the question'.⁴⁴ Unlike the Lover, she is aware of her crucifixion, paralysed by the sudden twist in the fate of her love. So intense is her awareness that she does not wish to be rescued from further deception: 'I don't want to be further justified. Keep your mind in hell and...I want to sob and sob and sob...until the prolonged shrieking becomes a shout of joy'.⁴⁵ This is the working through of contradictory emotions of bereavement which is explored earlier through Phocion's wife. The transformation taking place under the weight of her actual love, breaks up the Lover's world of ideality. She knows that 'loss' is nothing more or less than the degradation of the original gift and salvation of love: 'love's arrow poisoned and sent swiftly back into the heart'.⁴⁶ This response of the Beloved is crucial for she knows that her destruction is her survival,⁴⁷ and the way in which she chooses to survive will determine whether or not she repeats her love,

⁴² TBM, p. 189.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 66-7.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

‘singularly’, and therefore wills repetition, or like the Lover and the confidant, as an ‘ideal’ which leads her to withdraw from love completely, (the beautiful soul).

With the Beloved aware of her contradiction in experience and the experience of contradiction, she has surrendered herself to the broken middle. The ferocious sincerity of her love is so intensely singular she could not deny her identity in the contradiction because it would subordinate the formative experience of her as a whole. Her contradiction saves her. The truth of the Beloved requires loss in order to gain – the loss of herself becomes the gain of herself, for the journey of repetition is the passage from ‘beloved, loveableness, to love-ableness: from knowing oneself loved, “loveable”, to finding oneself graced with a plenitude of being-able-to-love again’.⁴⁸ To be love-able, the Beloved forms a union with the Lover: she must generate love, but without the love she received. This is the embodiment of unconditional love: the Beloved in union with the Lover journeys through the passage of repetition to ‘love singularly, to forgive, to release and hence to love again and again’,⁴⁹ for eternity.

The Beloved that withdraws from love completely, however, to be a shallow Lover or confidant, suppresses her feelings of deceit with the loss, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”⁵⁰ As ‘the beautiful soul’ this person knows this loss so deeply that she is overwhelmed by the initiation of process and pain, any risk of coming to *know*. Instead of roaring and roasting in the broken middle, she becomes this innocent, fragile adversary: the ‘beautiful soul’ that comes to inhabit the Beloved⁵¹ and alleviate her burden under ‘the mean of friendship’.⁵² She has allowed her protest to be emasculated by the potency of illusion, Utopia. She thinks of herself as a vision of truth, a martyr to the faith, whilst underneath this mask she is burdened by a false security of ‘closure’ or ‘totalisation’. If the Beloved does not cry, her body will cry – it will carry the weight of her burden, and her ‘audible shadow’ will emerge from the mystery of the

⁴⁸ TBM, p. 23.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ In *Gravity and Grace*, Thibon records these ‘words of the Redeemer’, which for Weil, ‘sum up all the agony of the creature thrown into the midst of time and evil and to which the Father only replies with silence.’ For Weil, this experience of Christ was sufficient to stamp Christianity with the mark of divinity. See GG, p. xxvi, & 79-83.

⁵¹ LW, p. 132.

⁵² Ibid., p. 68.

broken middle as a violent act of self-deception. Her reality will be that of ‘the beautiful soul’, lacking an actual existence, entangled in the contradiction, unable to unhinge herself from her disordered point of madness.⁵³

This madness finds refuge in love for Simone Weil: ‘a beloved being, [the Lover] who disappoints me. I have written to him. It is impossible that he should not reply by saying what I have said to myself in his name’.⁵⁴ The beautiful soul comes to inhabit the Beloved in Weil, for ‘men owe us what we imagine they will give us. We must forgive them this debt’.⁵⁵ What Weil then imagines is ‘a passion for love and justice and a belief that without it we banish God from our world’. For her, love is riddled with madness because it draws us to see another’s hurt and want to help – to stop it; it demands a kind of recklessness.⁵⁶

The madness of love draws one to discern and cherish equally, in all human milieu without exception, in all parts of the globe, the fragile earthly possibilities of beauty, of happiness and of fulfilment; to want to preserve them all with an equally religious care; and where they are absent to want to rekindle tenderly the smallest traces of those which have existed, the smallest seeds of those which can be born.⁵⁷

This kind of madness meshed with recklessness insists that one places oneself outside the frontiers of the present social order, and adopt this radical inversion of love within our thinking and acting. It is without surprise that in T. S. Eliot’s ‘preface’ to Weil’s *The Need for Roots*, one is confronted by a ‘difficult, violent and complex personality,’ which comes with ‘permanent association’ not with himself but with ‘someone who knew her’.⁵⁸ By this comment, Eliot intends to contrive Weil’s ‘human personality’ constructively, as a legacy, in order for any reader of a future time to capture a genuine understanding ‘of the author’.⁵⁹ Like Eliot, references elsewhere have been made through Gustave Thibon in order to deepen our insight into Weil’s personality and

⁵³ POS, § 668.

⁵⁴ GG, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ R. H. Bell, *Simone Weil: The Way of Justice as Compassion*, pp. 74-5.

⁵⁷ S. Weil, ‘Are We Struggling for Justice?’ trans. M. Barabas in *Philosophical Investigations* 53 (1987), 9-18.

⁵⁸ T. S. Eliot, ‘Preface’ in NR, pp. v-vi.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. vi-xii.

world. What supports my account of Weil as a vision of Goethe's 'beautiful soul' that turns away from 'repetition', is the recklessness of her madness of love amalgamated (as Thibon believed) with her refusal 'to make any concession whatever to the requirements and conventions of social life'.⁶⁰ Her sincerity in divulging every thought in every circumstance caused her many misadventures, with some of them nearly resulting in tragedy'.⁶¹

So even though we can agree with Eliot that all her thought was so intensely lived,⁶² indeed, as attempts have been made to suggest the contrary here and in earlier chapters, it is much to do with the dilemma between her own level of thought (in isolation) and the nature of a world with which she struggled to come to terms.⁶³ She wastes herself in 'yearning and pines away in consumption [...]. What it brings forth is only the non-spiritual unity'⁶⁴ in the duality of her world. Weil is 'the beautiful soul': 'a learned but sickly female, who comes to reject marriage, aristocratic courts and the activities of the new class of Burghers. She retires from the world to cultivate her deepening religious piety [...]'.⁶⁵

But Weil, like Rose, responds positively to the significance of work; work that returns the individual to the tension and difficulty of the human condition, and enables that individual to think intelligently and with dignity. But where both women part from one another is where Weil appears unable to embrace the 'third city' because of her submission to the authority of the supernatural and its capacity to heal the broken middle, the world. Through the healing of the broken middle, Weil tirelessly and endlessly attempted to reconcile contradictions she perceived in social life, but not from the point of illuminating the supernatural within the natural world. Instead, she wanted to heal the shortfalls of the latter in terms of enabling human beings to recognise the former. In short, this covered some earlier issues discussed between Weil and contradiction, but in

⁶⁰ GG, x & p. 34.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² NR, p. vi.

⁶³ 'We must accept this contradiction – the sign of our misery and our greatness – in all its bitterness.' See GG, p. xxv, & 89-93

⁶⁴ POS, §§ 668, 589.

⁶⁵ JM, pp. 175-210.

this case, contradiction and its implications for Simone Weil attempt to show how experiencing the void expresses love's work.

Through her use of contradiction, Weil finds 'no form, no middle, no world, to resist and reform her heavenly hopes'.⁶⁶ What is left for her is despair and affliction. Her only hope is to turn the 'dark night of her soul', the void, towards Christ, and to seek redemption in the love of God. This she attempts to do in the 'Prologue' of her *Notebooks*, an account of a 'mystical initiation'⁶⁷ that enables the supernatural to descend into space and time. Yet, this descending of the divine is mediated by her belief that salvation is constituted by endless despair. With the reality of Weil's perception of the void (which is recapped shortly) connected to the root of suffering and affliction in the supernatural, the prospects that she finds a sense of equanimity with contradiction in the 'Prologue' seem to initially be impossible and the result, therefore, is potentially devastating.

8.4 *The 'Weilian Void' in 'The Grave of Life'*

8.4.1 The Void

In the earlier chapters on Weil, illustrations were made to show how her notion of truth is inextricably linked to the nature of contradiction, that is, 'every truth becomes a contradiction'.⁶⁸ The void, says Weil, is part of the human condition, an inescapable reality that is exposed in our quest for truth through extreme suffering – affliction. Connected with this quest is her vision of the good – absolute and uncontaminated – and if one pierces deep within her supernatural world, one finds that God is the good.⁶⁹ Thus, for Weil, the connection between the void and the good, set in the context of truth, is this: the void is necessary in order that we focus our attention on the good, and its creation,

⁶⁶ JM, p. 150.

⁶⁷ J. Dargan, p. 16.

⁶⁸ N, p. 410.

⁶⁹ FLN, p. 349. See also GaG, pp. 41-45.

therefore, assists firstly, by exposing our illusory attachments to this physical realm, and secondly, rooting our desires within the reality of God.⁷⁰

To love truth ‘means to endure the void, and, the world must be regarded as containing something of a void in order that it may have need of God.’⁷¹ The experience, rather than the idea of the void, however, is something rather different. It is a case of redemptive suffering, affliction, through decreation. Through this experience, God withdraws from us, leaving a vacuum in the soul in order for love to descend. Contrary to nature, if we suspend our power so that we do not avoid the inescapable order of our spiritual transformation through the void,⁷² grace comes in service to fill the empty space: ‘grace fills empty spaces but it can only enter where there is a void to receive it’.⁷³ The void as an anguished experience of losing balance is the ‘uncontrollable impulse or event that invades the consciousness and threatens the equilibrium’.⁷⁴ It is the same threat that Christ experienced on the Cross: ‘My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ This is the ‘real proof that Christianity is something divine,’ and Weil depends upon this supernatural part of being abandoned by God,⁷⁵ in order to root the experience of affliction in the supernatural, to tie the natural and supernatural in a suffering God. Yet, the actual experience of this idea tells a very different truth, one that emerges through the story of the ‘Prologue’.

8.4.2 The ‘Prologue’

The experience of the ‘Prologue’ is arranged amongst several fragments of thought at the end of Weil’s *Notebooks* from Marseilles. Akin to her ‘Terrible Prayer’,⁷⁶ the ‘Prologue’ accounts for an overwhelming experience of a mystic’s annihilation and shattering experience of the ‘meaninglessness and alienation of modern urban life’.⁷⁷ What emerges

⁷⁰ See chapter III.

⁷¹ GG, p. 11.

⁷² Ibid., p. 10.

⁷³ Ibid. See also FLN, p. 159.

⁷⁴ J. Dargan, p. 54.

⁷⁵ GG, p. 79.

⁷⁶ FLN, pp. 243-4.

⁷⁷ J. Dargan, p. 67.

through this account is Weil's real struggle to experience the void. Her supernatural is rooted in a violent experience of isolation from the world, and 'her access to God, to the invisible and supernatural, which is first erotic and friendly', is subsequently converted to a deeper pathos of suffering and salvation.⁷⁸ The 'Prologue' is this experience of uprootedness, this pathos of suffering and salvation from urban life:

He entered my room and said: "Poor creature, you who understand nothing, who knows nothing. Come with me and I will teach you things which you do not suspect". I followed him. [...] He took me into a church. It was new and ugly. He led me up to the altar and said: "Kneel down". I said "I have not yet been baptized". He said "fall to your knees before this place, in love, as before the place where lies the truth". I obeyed.⁷⁹

What is interesting with the beginning of the 'Prologue' is the immediate setting of a Christ figure who commands, and the narrator who obeys – the relation of a master to a slave: 'the divine figure actually controls the seemingly arbitrary sequence of events',⁸⁰ while the narrator, Weil, is ordered to kneel. With this figure intervening, all movements henceforth are supernatural, and the narrator, consumed and overwhelmed, is subordinated to the point of an unexplained docility. In this docility, the slave, 'enslaved by necessity', is passive, surrendering its humanity, and avoiding action. At the start, the 'Prologue' is non-active in the sense that an individual's existence dissolves, as Hannah Arendt argues, into the docility of matter.⁸¹ 'The fisherman in his little boat [no longer] challenges necessity creatively, methodically'.⁸² The individual instead, subordinates itself to the reality of its creation – it ceases only to be delivered by divine love which it will never be able to comprehend.⁸³ The docile narrator, for Weil, is the Christian believer marked by slavery; her interaction whether in conversation or in silence, or in

⁷⁸ TBM, p. 190.

⁷⁹ N, p. 638.

⁸⁰ J. Dargan, p. 55.

⁸¹ See H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 97-99. Dietz uses Arendt to facilitate her argument that Weil's 'consent to necessity' forges an 'antipolitics so refractory to autonomy and to action that it must ultimately be rejected if we are to locate any ground for the pursuit of human dignity and freedom in this world, [...]'. See BHD, pp. 105-25.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸³ This corresponds to Weil's belief that through the act of decreation, we have no right to recognise the being-ness of our non-being. See my discussion at the end of chapter IV of this thesis.

consuming bread and wine, is an expression of her surrender to the domination of the supernatural entity. ‘He spoke. [...] At times he would fall silent, take some bread from a cupboard, and we would share it. [...] He would pour out some wine for me, and some for himself. [...] He had promised to teach me, but he did not teach me anything’.⁸⁴ The feeling of isolation and exclusion is evident given the privation of the location, the garret, and a more or less deep sense of alienation from the outside world: ‘He brought me out and made me climb up to the garret. Through the open window one could see the whole city spread out [...]’.⁸⁵ Hence, the sacred location, the on-going supernatural moments, and the experience of the end, the moment of abandonment the narrator experiences when she is asked to leave the garret, ‘one day he said to me: “Now go”’.⁸⁶

The response of the narrator is her supernatural calling, for it ‘captures the predicament of violence in love and love in violence,’ a struggle ‘in which “violence” is inseparable from staking oneself’.⁸⁷ Weil as the narrator struggles to stake herself. She is torn from modern-urban life, placed in isolation and in a surrendering experience, only to be devastated with the prospect of re-integrating herself into the world, ‘[wandering] along the streets’, her heart as it were in shreds.⁸⁸ This devastation leaves her without any roots, permanently uprooted from life, love, work and risk. The coming of the Christ figure is a mistake, for her place ‘is not in the garret’.⁸⁹ For Weil, the meaninglessness she sees in modern-urban life is a direct result of the rigid illustrations of her ‘supernatural’ – it is confined specifically to the garret; outside it there is no wholeness, there is no bridge that links ‘the sublime to the pedestrian,’ there is nothing that holds the garret and the outside world together. This desperate struggle is the ‘violence’ Weil shows to the world, outside her uncontaminated Good, which then returns to her so that the descending of the supernatural, like the natural, is a mistake: Weil ‘comes up against her own violence, her own abstractly universal self-identity. This violence of each

⁸⁴ N, p. 638.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ TBM, p. 151.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ N, p. 639.

individual towards its 'Other' and towards itself is then discoverable [...].⁹⁰ Her failing here is depicted by her attempt to fix and separate the two worlds – the natural and supernatural, which in the whole are naturally broken. There is no feeling of wholeness because the undercurrent of her separation and fixity in this 'parable of dispossession' and non-action misses the reality of the broken middle.

It seems unsurprising to find that Weil's ordeal of having been marked a slave 'was present in her thoughts as she composed the "Prologue"'.⁹¹ The parable exerts a force of domination without freedom in the name of universal interest. In which case, the fate of the 'Prologue', with the mark of slavery, is already doomed to devastation because of 'the character of the merely negative, uncomprehended power of universality [Weil's supernatural] on which individuality is smashed to pieces'.⁹²

8.4.3 The Fate of the 'Prologue'

Weil's fate that is driven away by her supernatural entity, feeling that 'he does not love me' is the first fate. Rose describes this in 'The Causality of Fate' as the experience of 'a hostile power which asserts itself against an individual as punishment'.⁹³ This fate, in other words, is the recognition that Weil as the slave is the trespasser who knows that she has armed the hostile power herself, 'that life has been turned into an enemy by [herself]'.⁹⁴ In which case, the domination of Weil's supernatural is only "lack of life", the defective whole "appearing as a power", and the trespasser recognises this deficiency as a part of herself, as what was to have been in her and is not. This lack is not a not-being, but is life known and felt as not-being.⁹⁵

This struggle in the 'Prologue' and in several of her works, exposes her second fate as the universal which precedes the action.⁹⁶ Punishment is not recognised as life, but is set absolutely against the individual with an unhappy fate. Unhappiness may become

⁹⁰ JM, pp. 8-9.

⁹¹ J. Dargan, p. 56.

⁹² POS, § 365.

⁹³ HCS, p. 155.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ ETW, p. 230-1.

⁹⁶ HCS, p. 156.

so great that her fate, her self-destruction, drives her toward the 'renunciation of life', that lifts her above fate entirely.⁹⁷ Like a sensitive plant, she withdraws into herself when touched. With an 'unhappy fate', her consciousness is equally doomed to an unhappy existence, which dualistically represents the belief that God is dead, i.e. He 'dwells beyond concrete existence and is, therefore, absent'.⁹⁸ In the 'Prologue', Weil's Christ is similarly absent when she is cast back into modern urban-life. The supernatural is confined only to the small space in the garret. Everywhere else, 'in a prison cell, in one of those middle-class drawing-rooms [...]',⁹⁹ simply becomes a distraction to her so that only 'a particle of myself' as she says, knows that 'he loves me'.¹⁰⁰ Only a particle of herself can verify her place in the broken middle, her own contradictory self-relation, for the majority of her attention is drawn 'to all the pressure of the surrounding universe'.

Towards the end of her life, whilst living in London, she comments in her letter to Maurice Schumann, on the same devastation she recognises in the 'Prologue'. She recognises the destructive energy in her intellect and heart as her inability to understand 'the affliction of men, the perfection of God, and the link between the two'.¹⁰¹ Further on in her letter, Weil considers the possibility that she might be enlightened with this truth if she were afflicted.

Her obsession with Christ and his suffering, the 'Terrible Prayer', her factory work, her 'many middles', only tally towards her need to yearn for an experience of affliction, followed by the void as a destruction of self in order to attain her vision of the divine reality. Christ found his freedom 'in his heart, only in the void,' for love 'was not supposed to be a union of individualities – [Utopia] – it was a union in God and God alone'.¹⁰² The affliction of France, and the world at war was not meant to be her affliction. For if she *really* was the slave she thought she was, that particle of herself

⁹⁷ ETW, pp. 235-6.

⁹⁸ HCS, pp. 159-60. 'The feeling that God is dead or absent has always been central to Christian religious experience, because in the Christian religion the absolute is misrepresented as beyond human life, not present in it.' See *ibid.*, 104-120; G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on The Philosophy of Religion*, vol. II, p. 190. See also, POS, §§ 785, 206-229.

⁹⁹ N, p. 639.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ SL, pp. 178-79.

¹⁰² ETW, pp. 284-6.

worthy of love would perhaps have brought her into a knowingness and a presence of that love in work, in the contradiction of her experience and her experience of contradiction. Passing through the void, which Weil struggled to do, resides in her dilemma to relate the supernatural to the natural. It created her “‘infinite grief’ of the finite,’ that feeling of being ‘abandoned by a characterless, omnipotent and hence impotent God’.¹⁰³ This grief meant as Thibon, and particularly Rose point out, that Weil could not extend herself ‘to the most elementary practices that enable a person to pass unnoticed’.¹⁰⁴ This inability to pass unnoticed ultimately brings together the reality that her spiritual world was her *supernatural* failing.

8.5 *Salvation: To Pass Unnoticed*

Weil’s inability to pass unnoticed, returns to the discussion of Rose’s ‘third city’ in which Phocion’s wife represents a way in which she integrates the balance between one’s inner and outer reality in the experience of contradiction. The aspects of this reality, however, are also in contradiction, where the inner aspect remains hidden and unnoticed whilst the outer aspect is exposed through her ordinariness to resume life in the world in spite of her bereavement. In this way, it is Weil’s inability to own the ‘violence’ of the ‘Prologue’, for example, rather than disowning it (as she does) by rejecting modern urban-life that exacerbates her inclination to resolve contradiction with the authority of the supernatural. This lack of ownership of violence and the consequence of ‘infinite grief’ mentioned above imply that she was unwilling to hold to ‘the double dangers’ of the *polis*. Moreover, the unintended consequence of numerous dualistic conflicts that were tempted with supernatural resolutions within her life and work suggest also that she could not pass unnoticed. The upshot being that her spiritual vocation turned into her *supernatural* failing’.¹⁰⁵ Rose, on the other hand, as Kierkegaard’s ‘knight or lady of faith’, wanted to pass unnoticed:

¹⁰³ HCS, p. 104.

¹⁰⁴ P, p. 424.

¹⁰⁵ JM, p. 222.

I like to pass unnoticed, which is why I hope that I am not deprived of old age. I aspire to be exactly as I am, decrepit nature, yet supernature on one, equally alert on the damp ground and in the turbulent air. Perhaps I don't have to wait for old age for that invisible trespass and pedestrian tread, insensible of mortality and desperately mortal.¹⁰⁶

To live in this way, in which one finds that their inner reality is never what it appears to be through their outer reality, sustains the legacy of ambivalence and the tension, difficulty and contradiction posed by Rose's 'third city'. Love's work then is willing to experience the 'discomforts of love',¹⁰⁷ to 'stay in the fray, in the revel of ideas and risk; learning, failing, wooing, grieving, trusting, working, reposing – in this sin of language and lips'.¹⁰⁸ The fray of the broken middle is exposed in Rose's autobiography, *Love's Work*. It embodies the union of life and death, the experience of contradiction, and a resistance towards perfection – the duplication of a negative self-relation. Rose's closest friend, Edna, embodies normal, human imperfections for she has 'not been exceptional'.¹⁰⁹ Like Rose, Edna is unsure, in life and relationships. Her marriage "was not happy. My husband was disappointed with me." "Although, when he died", says Rose, Edna was the only person permitted to attend her husband: 'the nurses in the hospital had to assure him that they were "Edna"'.¹¹⁰ With this uncertainty, her inner, negative self-relation, Edna found a sense of equanimity in her life, a point of being unnoticed in her realm of magic, 'the quiet and undramatic transmutation that can come out of plainness, ordinary hurt, mundane maladies and disappointments'.¹¹¹ The combination here of visibility and invisibility in a life of contradiction, is Edna, coming face to face with the broken middle. In Rose's life, she is an embodiment of Kierkegaard's 'Knight of Faith', like Agathe Christie's creation, Miss Marple – a woman who lives and manifests herself in the broken middle.¹¹² It is uncanny that Edna, an icon of the broken middle, meets Rose at the time in which *The Broken Middle* is published. A

¹⁰⁶ LW, pp. 134-5.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹² See JM, pp. 211-223.

‘book on Kierkegaard’, which announces that life must be risked in order to be gained, and in the same breadth, *Love’s Work*, equally Kierkegaardian, ‘allows one to pass unnoticed’:

It deploys sensual, intellectual and literary eros, companions of pain, passion and plain curiosity, in order to pass beyond the preoccupation with endless loss to the silence of grace.¹¹³

To risk life and to pass unnoticed is where Rose and Edna meet each other with Kierkegaard: ‘from the first we had Kierkegaard between us’.¹¹⁴ Yet, love’s work begins in fiction with ‘a proper, fussy, inquisitive, old lady,’ with ‘her success in establishing justice invariably depend[ing] on her being able to pass unnoticed while noticing everything herself’.¹¹⁵ Miss Marple ‘is the code-name for this movement from loss to grace: as the sublime in the pedestrian’, she as the knight of faith ‘simply appears as whatever she is: she returns to her vocation beyond the endless anxiety of the test of salvation’.¹¹⁶ The momentum of salvation passes through the consciousness of all three individuals – including Rose. The lack of exceptionality makes them exceptional. Everything is risked in order to be gained, which means salvation is not so much in the certainty of things, but in the uncertainty of things. The contrast in salvation between Weil and Rose is apparent through the distinction of Kierkegaard’s knights: firstly, the ‘Knight of Faith’ and secondly, the ‘Knight of Resignation’. The latter in Weil ‘is recognisable: she cherishes her misfortunes, remaining loyal and dedicated to the mists of memories. She clearly lives companioned by ghosts: family, friends, loves and lovers’.¹¹⁷ By contrast, the former in Rose, Edna and Miss Marple, ‘moves behind this all-too-human stoicism: she lets her lost ones go, whether injured or injurious, and turns her attention to the astonishing nature of what is normally expected until she becomes both invisible, hidden, and quite ordinarily visible’.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ PA, p. 17.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ JM, pp. 222-3.

¹¹⁶ PA, pp. 17-18.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

With salvation reaching the summits of visibility and invisibility, Rose meets her own discomforts in illness – love in ‘the intensified agon of living’.¹¹⁹ In the midst of this intensity with cancer, Rose reflects upon her accentuated being; not her morbidity but rather, her renewed vitality.¹²⁰ The expectation of illness, morbidity and death highlights the sort of condition that she also recognises in ‘the combative emulation of immediate ancestors,’ namely, the ‘anxiety of modernity’.¹²¹ *Contra* anxiety and anxiety refer to Rose’s distinction of the meanings of ‘Control’. The first form of ‘Control’ which relates to the ‘anxiety of modernity’, the desire to fly from the middle, is to manage things in such a way that you determine what others think or do. The second meaning of ‘Control’, *contra* anxiety, which ‘may induce the relinquishing of “control” in the first sense, refers to things of untoward happenings, ‘which one makes the initially unwelcome event one’s own inner occupation’.¹²² The untoward situations in our lives place the individual under the greatest demands by the broken middle: ‘in ill-health as in unhappy love, this is the hardest work: it requires taking-in before letting-be’.¹²³ With the ‘cancer personality’ amalgamated in the mixed blessings and curses of Rose, she poignantly expresses, ‘I handle my shit’,¹²⁴ ‘I must return to my life affair’.¹²⁵ Rose’s treatment brings forward the actuality of protest with passion and faith. The prescription of sickly remedies characterises her sentiment on the condition of post-modernity, ‘despairing rationalism without reason’.¹²⁶ Her cancer, therefore, is the risk of love’s work as reason, ‘inaugurated mourning’ and not ‘aberrated mourning’, hidden but present in ambivalence.

Salvation for the ‘knight of resignation’, Weil, requires a sense of predestination for the soul so that it keeps its mind out of hell:

you have eternal life only if you dissolve the difficulty of living, of love, of self and other, of the other in the self, if you are translucent, without inner or outer

¹¹⁹ LW, 71.

¹²⁰ LW, 72.

¹²¹ Ibid., 76.

¹²² Ibid., 90-1.

¹²³ Ibid., 91.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 96.

¹²⁶ See *ibid.*, 116-19. See also, PA, 42-3.

boundaries. If you lead a normally unhappy life, you are predestined to eternal damnation, you will not live.¹²⁷

For Weil, to keep your mind out of hell is to continually revive the tragedy of God. This emanates 'infinite grief' and despair, and a longing for an omnipotent and omniscient being outside of time and space, empty and without substance: 'it has no *presence* as the communal achievement of existing individuals, and can only be represented as *beyond* real existence'.¹²⁸

8.6 Conclusion

The aim and style of this chapter has been rather different to previous sections of this thesis. The important point to realise is that various discussions have been more inclined to comment on what has already been analysed and reviewed in previous chapters, rather than having to analyse what has already been analysed. The investigation has attempted to show how Rose and Weil address the individual with, in and through contradiction as the genesis of the search for salvation. In short, Rose's 'Third City' and Weil's 'Prologue' as well as her supernatural expectations for society, represent two different alternatives of how to relate to contradiction, and therefore, what it is to 'know thyself' as a human being living in the world but with God – living, that is, with equanimity and temperance between one's inner and outer reality. Socrates was able to comprehend the divine in this way through his death.¹²⁹ It is why the nature of his passing was so self-contained and entirely motivated towards the truth of his own immortality. There was no sense in which he inflicted himself on the collective, and with true inspiration he never abnegated the integrity of others to experience and learn for themselves the nature of the transcendent worlds. Socrates' intention was to enlighten rather than to save a person from himself.¹³⁰ In contrast, Simone Weil was desperate in her attempts to save 'the other' in human beings so much so that she places herself in the world 'as a kind of

¹²⁷ Ibid., 97-8.

¹²⁸ HCS, 74.

¹²⁹ Plato, *Phaedo*, 64A-C, 105D-106E.

¹³⁰ For further discussion on this spiritual principle of divine integration in a human world, see HCS, 21-32.

scapegoat for our unfulfilled impulse to virtue and purity'.¹³¹ But she goes further than this, in fact 'further than any of us would dare to venture, *she does it for us*'.¹³² This amounted to the imbalance between the inner and outer aspects of herself – her lack of temperance. Her difficulty, in other words, to pass unnoticed in the 'most elementary practices'¹³³ measure up to her struggle to detach from her deep attachments to 'otherness':

She, who when her pleasure or her needs were involved would not have allowed anyone to make the slightest sacrifice on her behalf, did not seem to realize the complications and even sufferings she caused in the lives of others as soon as it was a matter of realizing her vocation for self-effacement. [...] She wanted to forget herself and would come upon herself in this very forgetfulness; she loved her neighbour with all her being, and in her devotion she often overlooked the real desires and needs of others.¹³⁴

For Rose, her intense responsibility towards life and her on-going battle with the double dilemma of self-relation begins to find some way through with her last piece of work, *Paradiso*. This incomplete text affirms the joys of companionship and memory. Where the broken middle represents the individual working towards and sustaining the balance and temperance of contradiction between his or her inner and outer reality, the *Paradiso* deepens the exploration of this contradiction through Rose's desire to remain hidden, to be visible and invisible all at the same time. This is to 'know thyself' as the risk of love, reason, and cancer. With reason, in particular, she draws upon its spiritual nature as a mask, as with Phocion's wife, in order to protect the complete vulnerability of her mourning. Its presence and hiddenness in suspension and equivocation alludes to the reality of the individual in social life.

In a nutshell, Rose has returned to her everyday vocation only to respond that her deep sense of struggle 'needed some response, some way of singing its mystery'¹³⁵ in the broken middle. Being in the mystery of what is visible and invisible together enabled Rose to remain hidden: 'only she who is truly hidden can truly enhance: only the

¹³¹ See S. Sontag, 'Simone Weil', *Against Interpretation*, pp. 58-9.

¹³² F. D. P. Gray, *Simone Weil*, p. 223.

¹³³ P, p. 424.

¹³⁴ PT, pp. 116-18

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

powerless can wider power, power transcended by powerlessness'.¹³⁶ To be hidden, like Phocion's wife, is to revel in the middle, to keep working in it, and to keep aspiring to a deeper truth of oneself. So salvation, and the genesis of its search is the void of the broken middle, that is, *contra* Weil, to mutually accept the double danger: the pathos of gravity (of weight, ground, earth, city) – channelled to grace – means that spiritual and religious life (supernatural) is not radically divorced from nature, being, logic and politics'.¹³⁷ This is our way in and through contradiction, which Rose's life affair, *Love's Work* represents: to "Be – and at the same time know the terms of negation'.¹³⁸ This is the illumination of consciousness in which our human and divine nature emerge in the ever-present reality of this world, the broken middle.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 36.

¹³⁷ PA, p. 63.

¹³⁸ MBL, p. 146.

Conclusions

The goal of this thesis has been to investigate and explore the respective ways in which Simone Weil and Gillian Rose have understood and assessed the human condition as the tension and conflict of human life. The notion of contradiction has been employed in each of their respective cases in order to elucidate their understanding of the human situation in the world. In terms of their precise philosophical concerns, the 'void' in Simone Weil and 'the broken middle' in Gillian Rose have been employed in order to elucidate the genesis of the search for salvation, that is, how an individual lives with, in and through contradiction in the world but with God. Several key investigations from Part II and III have addressed the way Weil and Rose respectively relate to and use contradiction conceptually and experientially, with the last and only chapter of Part IV exploring how to live with, in and through contradiction.

Weil and Rose agree on the one fundamental conceptual premise of contradiction: 'the mind maintains real within itself the simultaneous notion of the contradictories, [...] or else it is tossed about from one of contraries to the other'.¹ Their use, understanding and exploration of contradiction both conceptually and experientially, however, distinguish their perception of and approach to the human condition. One of several explanations can be found in the fact that Weil did not truly experience contradiction given that she never really knew despair, even more so, affliction;² whereas Rose, conversely, on the opening page of her autobiography, knew this feeling all too well through the loss of her father and her decision to change her name from 'Stone' to 'Rose'. Recognising the horrors of modern life, Rose continued to insist that one must 'keep your mind in hell and despair not'.³ To be precise, the difference between both women in this enquiry is that both kept their intellectual and experiential preoccupations in 'hell', but where Gillian Rose despaired not, Simone Weil despaired continually. The contentiousness, therefore, of Weil's 'despair' which was the undercurrent of several investigations into her life and work in chapters II-IV, illustrate the gulf she attempted,

¹ N, p. 387.

² See R. Rees, *Discussions of Simone Weil*, ed. D. Z. Phillips, p. 118.

³ See LW.

but struggled to overcome between the imperfect, physical world and the perfect, self-contained supernatural world of the good as God.

For Weil, the tension and conflict then between the creator and creation is not because she struggled with Rose's sense of suspension and equivocation with living and working, but that her world presupposed a separation between the meaninglessness of this world and the longing for pure goodness of the other. This dualistic presupposition and her vision of the supernatural world began in chapter II with early childhood experiences in which her intense and obsessive encounters with 'the other' – the oppressed and afflicted – spurred her eagerness to not only reform their physical lives, but equally and importantly, their souls. Weil's intention to reform the human soul began with her use and assessment of Descartes' metaphysics in order to address the division of labour in society, and more importantly, establish an epistemic criterion in which to resolve the human condition and enable human beings to think intelligently in order to make contact with the external world. The key to this possibility was the transformation of thought into action.

Chapter III investigated this transformation through Weil's social and political preoccupations, looking closely at the nature of human liberty as the relation between thought and action, and the context in which that freedom would be possible. Several discussions reached the following conclusions. Firstly, Weil's social ideas were too etheric and abstract, and that more importantly, her notion of human freedom that was intended to break the exclusivity within social systems, fails to be anymore inclusive than the structures she criticised in the first place. Secondly, the impracticality of identified areas of her writings reflect a primary concern towards the basis in which her metaphysical assertions are established, namely, that her supernatural vision and its position in relation to the natural world appear to be entirely separate. And lastly, the distance of this vision from the natural events that take place in the physical world means that the actual substance of her supernatural reality fails to adequately account for how the human being might work its inner world in relation to the demands of its outer, communal situation.

Separate from these concerns, however, one must not forget the impetus behind her intellectual and practical methodologies. Weil made it her life journey to 'reconstruct

the world in accordance with the facts of her own experience',⁴ and the way in which she revises Descartes' idealism, for example, with the undercurrent of an intellectual realism is evidence of this reconstruction. But what makes her overall philosophical methodology possible is her use and application of contradiction. Weil, as McFarland puts it, had the ability to keep fixed in her mind both of the polarities of any contradiction. Her use of and approach to contradiction corresponds to a wider appreciation of it in her writings, in the sense that contradiction is intended to provide 'a gateway to a fuller encounter with reality'.⁵ This reality is defined and explored in terms of her mystical theology which attempts to strip away the illusions of elitism and abstract thought and establish a fuller reality in the minds of all individuals and in the mind's relation to the external world.

It would appear, therefore, that Weil had the insight and intention to bridge the abstract world with the practical affairs of human life. But Chapter IV explores why it is that she failed to appropriately relate the supernatural to the affairs of the natural order. These explorations addressed her religious preoccupations and her attitude of self-renunciation that would encourage the individual to give up the illusions of material reality. This act leads to an encounter with, and an experience of, the void and contradiction in Weil's mystical theology, but what this section concluded was how she failed to return the contradiction between the way the world is and the way it *ought* to be, to herself. The consequences of this reached a climax in the previous chapter through her 'Prologue'. If the world were as it ought to be, says Weil,⁶ the forces of necessity would serve as a 'less servile form'⁷ ('divine necessity') that would enable the individual to consent (to go on loving) in the unfortunate case of suffering and affliction. The individual in this state is then able to recognise the *value* of its suffering. But this value and our capacity to consent is predetermined according to the activeness of this idea of the good in society. In short, the implication of this is that the forces and events of *this* world that expose the contradiction between the natural and supernatural is overridden by the forces and events of a pseudo-natural world which Weil attempted to bridge with her perception of the supernatural. For the world we live in Weil was unwilling to embrace

⁴ FLN, p. 218.

⁵ E. O. Springsted, 'Contradiction, Mystery and the Use of Words', p. 3.

⁶ Weil was inclined to make these sorts of illustrations, for example, through her social and political writings and in her essay on 'Human Personality' in 1943. See MILES, pp. 49-78.

⁷ A. Nava, *The Mystical and Prophetic Thought of Simone Weil and Gustavo Gutiérrez*, p. 36.

its contradictions and oppositions given that she sees no way through the natural world as it stands and the reality of the supernatural as she perceives it to be.

Therefore, there are several presuppositions which make up the sort of world Weil wishes to establish in order to bridge it with the 'other reality'. But this only goes to show that, for her at least, this world is irrevocably separated from the world beyond. Thus, her orchestrated, ideal world which lies between the actual reality of the natural world and the perception she had of the supernatural world, not only limits our response and reaction to the reality we live in, but also limits our capacity to establish a way in which to live with, in, and through contradiction. Human beings caught in this limitation struggle to recognize then the meaning and purpose of contradictory experience in human life. Fixed by the indeterminacy of her vision of the heavenly realms outside of herself, Weil struggled, as Rose would argue, to recognise her own contradictory self-relation, that is, the contradiction between the natural and supernatural within her own life. This is what Gnostic thought in chapter IV attempted to elucidate: how to bring the disparate parts of the individual and Simone Weil into harmony and balance so that one learns to live in, with and through contradiction, but in relation to divine reality.

Weil's attention and obsessiveness towards the perfection of otherness was, as Rose would suggest, a recipe for disaster for it shows an unwillingness to make mistakes and recognise failure. For Rose, Weil's absolute identity with and absorption into otherness meant that she frustrated her own struggle to embrace her nature, her sense of equanimity as a human being. The dialectic and experience of her life was always in the business of representing an indeterminate middle, an ideal – supernatural love and goodness – that failed to recognise its own difficulties and contradictions. This unrecognised failure interferes with meaning or mediation⁸ between Weil as subject and 'the Other' as object. In spite of her best intentions to bring thought into action, and indeed to forge a connection between intellectual thought and practical life, Weil struggled to pass through her dilemmas within and outside of this world.

Rose, on the other hand, came to a very different reference point through her reservations against abstract intellectualism and elite, bourgeois social relations. She adopts more of a non-dualistic position in her thinking about contradiction that eschews

⁸ JM, p. 8.

the tendency to overcome, resolve or transcend the experience of contradiction and the contradiction of experience. This is explored through her philosophical idea, the broken middle. Rose's idea of how to live a human life constituted her desire to live according to the inevitabilities of reality, which was addressed in the last chapter. Rose never attempted to 'demonise' her cancer,⁹ but instead faced the difficulties that were present to her. For her, life was about responsibility which in and through its contradictions, required work rather than evasion. The personal configurations of contradiction in her autobiography as much as her conceptual and metaphysical configurations in her academic texts elucidate Rose's existential commitment to the whole self. That is to say, she never perceived philosophy to be so abstract that one could not have some kind of existential relation of the self to philosophy. This approach to experience is not just existential but clearly and equally speculative in the Hegelian sense.

Chapters V-VII, therefore, explored her affinity to and radical interpretation of the tenets of Hegel's thinking, which included an account of its genesis in relation to Kant's, Fichte's and Schelling's philosophical systems. Accounting for Hegel's speculative logic and experience allowed us to develop Rose's idea, the broken middle, which furthered Hegel's speculative dictum with discussions that were orientated in and around her belief that the mistakes and failures of Kantian and Fichtean paradigms were repeated in sociological reasoning and social theory. These criticisms were largely addressed in Chapter VII through Rose's preoccupation with post-modernity, in particular, its sole identification with otherness – the love community as 'New Jerusalem' that subordinates reason – 'Old Athens'. Rose attempts to weave together Athens and Jerusalem through the traumas of reason, critiquing John Milbank's political theology which deploys what she calls, 'holy middles' that avoid these traumas and instead attempt to overcome its difficulties and contradictions. Towards the end of Chapter VII, the broken middle is investigated less from within its conceptual context and more from within a personal context in relation to both Weil and Rose. Here it becomes intensely singular, which initially Rose's 'Jewish witnesses', Arendt and Varnhagen experience through their own contradictory self-relation, and then one in which Rose herself experiences in and through her autobiography *Love's Work*. All three women through the broken middle

⁹ J. M. Bernstein, 'A Work of Hard Love', *The Guardian*, 11 December 1995, p. 12.

warn against holding to either side of 'the double danger', that is, to the dangers of external authority of the modern state and/or the inner authority of the autonomous individual. It is their view of 'the double danger' that the genesis of the search for salvation was addressed in the last chapter; firstly, through Rose's 'third city' and secondly, through Weil's 'Prologue'.

Weil, like Rose, warns about this double danger, but nevertheless, unlike Rose and her Jewish 'witnesses', Weil, like Milbank, though for different reasons, attempts to resolve this particular 'double danger' through the supernatural, that is, to transfigure not just the current modern state, but equally the autonomous individual that is bound by it in the first place. This is why the 'Prologue' as much as Weil's overall relation to contradiction make her 'the beautiful soul', exposing her difficulty to live in, with and through contradiction in human affairs. 'The double danger' in *The Broken Middle* was further explored through Phocion's wife in Rose's 'third city', which concluded with the spiritual orientation of that city in *Love's Work* and *Paradiso*.

To live with, in and through contradiction is to hold to neither of these double dangers so that we continually explore, examine and inquire into who and what we are through contradictory experience. A person's self-identity, and therefore, self-understanding is neither determined entirely by its inner convictions nor the position and place it finds itself to be in society and institutions, but rather, by the contradictory exchange between what a person is in-itself and the way this appears as it is to the outside world. Witnessing this contradiction allows a person in itself to pass unnoticed and in silence, and yet be noticed in their ordinariness of living, wooing, learning, failing, trusting, working and reposing. For Weil, the roaring and roasting of herself left her bewildered and empty in places. It only left her perplexed as to how the suffering of humanity could ever be reconciled in the perfection of God. For Rose, on the other hand, the way to love anything is to realise it may be lost.

To be in this way is to be able to withdraw into our inner world temporarily and be able to reflect upon ourselves (objective mediation) so that what we appear to be in a world in which we engage with others is to appear sincerely and consistently in our actions and words.¹⁰ In other words, our sense of self-identity, our salvation, is the

¹⁰ See for example, H. Arendt, *Thinking*, vol. 1, *The Life of the Mind*, pp. 30-37.

stability and knowingness of our inner-self (unnoticed), but simultaneously the way in which that inner self mirrors the outer-self of a person. Finding this balance between private and public life is set in the mystery of contradiction as the broken middle. An inquiry into whether we can ever overcome the broken middle, contradictory experience, particularly since this thesis has attempted only to find a way through it is open to further research and discussion. Further studies on the relation between Rose's work and neo-gnostic thought would go some way to also identifying and connecting the ancient world with contemporary life and culture. Furthermore, her broken middle could be subject to further explorations outside mainstream western thought, perhaps, in terms of addressing the cultural and spiritual significance of non-western traditions and belief systems.

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