

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-57849-3 - *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation*

Gillian Rose

Frontmatter

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In *Mourning Becomes the Law*, Gillian Rose takes us beyond the impasse of post-modernism or 'despairing rationalism without reason'. Arguing that the post-modern search for a 'new ethics' and ironic philosophy are incoherent, she breathes new life into the debates concerning power and domination, transcendence and eternity.

*Mourning Becomes the Law* is the philosophical counterpart to Gillian Rose's highly acclaimed memoir *Love's Work*. She extends similar clarity and insight to discussions of architecture, cinema, painting and poetry, through which relations between the formation of the individual and the theory of justice are connected. At the heart of this reconnection lies a reflection on the significance of the Holocaust and Judaism.

*Mourning Becomes the Law* reinvents the classical analogy of the soul, the city and the sacred. It returns philosophy, Nietzsche's 'bestowing virtue', to the pulse of our intellectual and political culture.

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‘I may die before my time’, Gillian Rose says in this remarkable book. She did; but she understood dying as few people have, and she lived her drastically shortened time as a philosopher who believed both in the soul and in the necessary charm of earthly powers. The just city, for Gillian Rose, is not built by the abandonment of reason or the proclamation of uncompromised virtue. It is built by faith in the achievements of even ruined reason and in the different chances of politics that are not ashamed of themselves. Death is at the heart of this book, but no one has ever argued more beautifully or eloquently that “death is not for nothing”, and that mourning, when it becomes the law, that is, when it returns to reason, could even put an end to what Gillian Rose calls the “endless dying” of life under tyranny.’

Michael Wood, Princeton University

‘*Mourning Becomes the Law* extends and deepens Gillian Rose’s critique of postmodernism, especially in its “ethical” guise. She demonstrates the complicity between a “holocaust piety”, an escapist fantasy concerning a misrepresented Judaism, and a fetishization of death. This book heralds a new theoretical dawn.’

John Milbank, University of Cambridge

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