

## Obituary

**Ian Charles Jarvie †**  
(8<sup>th</sup> July 1937-16<sup>th</sup> May 2023)



(Picture: Courtesy of Mrs. Pam Shearmur)

Ian Jarvie, of whose death we have just heard, was a remarkable man. He studied anthropology at the London School of Economics as an undergraduate, and then wrote his Ph.D., under Karl Popper, applying a Popperian approach to issues in anthropology. (See his *The Revolution in Anthropology*.) This work offers not only an interesting theoretical treatment of problems in anthropology to do with cargo cults. It offers also a sustained discussion and appraisal of Popper's methodological ideas in the context of concrete issues in the social sciences. *The Revolution in Anthropology* was followed by other volumes tackling related topics, such as *Concepts and Society* and *Rationality and Relativism*.

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After a Period working as Popper's assistant at the L.S.E., Jarvie took up a position at the University of Hong Kong, later moving to York University, Toronto, where he remained for the rest of his career. In Hong Kong, he became involved in fruitful life-long collaboration with Joseph Agassi (whom he had known from the L.S.E.). This led to papers on such topics as 'The Rationality of Magic'; to their many-volume edition of Ernest Gellner's papers; to their collection *Rationality: The Critical View*; and to their joint book on *Critical Rationalist Aesthetics*. Jarvie was also editor, with Sandra Pralong, of *Popper's Open Society after 50 Years* and – with Karl Milford and David Miller – of the wide-ranging three-volume collection, *Karl Popper: A Centenary Assessment*.

Jarvie's own book, *The Republic of Science*, is worth particular mention as offering a striking partly social interpretation of Popper's epistemology.

Not only did Jarvie write extensively on issues to do with anthropology and critical rationalism (especially on the philosophy of social science). But he wrote also numerous articles, and published several books, on the sociology and philosophy of film, including *Philosophy of the Film: Epistemology, Ontology, Aesthetics*. (See, for a list of Jarvie's extensive publications: <https://jarvie.info.yorku.ca/files/2019/01/ListofPublications.pdf?x48812>)

In addition to all this, Jarvie played a key role as managing editor of the major journal *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, of which he was one of the founders. This journal was significant not only as the locus of debates in the philosophy of social science, but also because of the various exchanges that it contained on issues to do with critical rationalism more generally.

Jarvie was a man of considerable achievement, but of great modesty. He played a really important role in the development of critical rationalism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He will be sorely missed.