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## Introduction: Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888–1973)

Wayne Cristaudo, Norman Fiering & Andreas Leutzsch

We wish to thank the board of *Culture, Theory and Critique* for allowing us to devote a special edition of the journal to Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy. It is a brave move because he is certainly not among the philosophical and social theoretical stars who are widely cited and considered essential reading for anyone interested in social critique, although we believe he should be. The fundamental question is whether he has something of urgent importance to say. We hope that this collection of eight essays will demonstrate that he does.

The range of the essays and the diversity of disciplines they cover are indicative of the depth and breadth of Rosenstock-Huessy's knowledge and creativity: David Bade explores the importance of Rosenstock-Huessy for linguistics, Peter Leithart for theology, Andreas Leutzsch for history, Wayne Cristaudo for sociology, Otto Kroesen for his contribution (in comparison with Emmanuel Levinas and Franz Rosenzweig) to what usually goes under the rubric of globalisation, but which Rosenstock-Huessy referred to as a 'planetary society'. All of these essays attempt to establish the value of his insights in those fields.

Then there is the question of Rosenstock-Huessy's influence and impact. A brief list of some of his correspondents is indicative of the quality of minds with which he directly engaged: Carl Schmitt (whom he never forgave for his Nazism), Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebuhr, Alfred North Whitehead, Paul Tillich, Jacob and Susan Taubes, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Carl Friedrich, Karl Löwith (whom he particularly disliked), W. H. Auden (who wrote the Preface to his *I Am an Impure Thinker*), Helmuth von Moltke (whom he taught) and Helmuth's widow, Freya (who would become his companion after the death of Margrit Huessy), Sabine Leibholz (the twin sister of Dietrich Bonhoeffer), Carl Zuckmayer and Hermann Rauschning.

If Rosenstock-Huessy felt isolated after he emigrated to the United States in 1933, earlier as a young academic and social activist and educator in Germany he was constantly involved in socially innovative projects. Apart from his life as a professor – interrupted immediately after World War I – he was the first editor of a factory newspaper in Germany for Daimler Benz workers; the first director of the adult education initiative of the Academy of Labour in Frankfurt; and then between 1929 and 1933 vice-chairman of the World Association for Adult Education. He also played a founding role in setting up student-worker-farmer groups in Waldenberg and Silesia,

which he did later also in North America in about 1940 with the Camp William James initiative. He was also (with Karl Barth amongst others) one of the founders of the Patmos publishing house, and the journal *Die Kreatur*, 1926–1930. Both were attempts to bind together people with different faiths against what they saw as the more pernicious faiths and forces of modernity which would take hold of Germany and which have lingered long after the defeat of National Socialism. *Die Kreatur* included articles by Walter Benjamin, Florens Christian Rang, Leo Shestov, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Joseph Wittig, Hugo Bergman, Viktor von Weiszäcker, Ludwig Strauß, Nicolai Berdyaev and Margaret Susman. As different as all these writers were from each other, they, as well as contributors to the Patmos publishing house, were united by their daring, intellectual brilliance, and the hopes they shared in looking to rescue Germany from its ‘gods’ of state, nation and empire by urging the country to take greater stock of its genuinely spiritual heritage. In this issue, Knut Stünkel has performed an invaluable service by examining Rosenstock-Huessy through the prism of Patmos and *Die Kreatur*.

Interestingly, as Christian Roy demonstrates, Rosenstock-Huessy’s thought also had an impact on another brilliant, and largely forgotten, group of thinkers in France, the ‘Personalists’ and the ‘Ordre Nouveau’. Roy’s essay is a remarkable contribution to this unduly neglected current of French intellectual history.

The one place where Rosenstock-Huessy’s name should be impossible to avoid is in the scholarship surrounding his student, close friend and correspondent, Franz Rosenzweig. Many years ago, Harold Stahmer brought together Rosenzweig’s many avowals of his deep debt to Rosenstock-Huessy, which seems to have had little impact (Stahmer 2009: 105–138). But now, after the release of the ‘Gritli Letters’ (the complete collection of 1200 letters can be found at <http://argobooks.org/gritli/index.html>), which reveal the vital role of the love between Rosenstock-Huessy’s wife, Margrit (Gritli), and Rosenzweig in the composition of *The Star of Redemption*, no one can authoritatively treat Rosenzweig if he or she does not take account of what Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy and Margrit Huessy meant to him. Unfortunately, outside of the small circle of Rosenstock-Huessy scholarship, the picture of Rosenstock-Huessy that has emerged in Rosenzweig studies is neither fair nor flattering, let alone accurate. Rosenstock-Huessy’s grandson, Ray Huessy, has used this opportunity to help set the record straight by presenting heretofore unpublished letters.

In the English-speaking world, at least, if Rosenstock-Huessy is known at all it is mainly through the letters he exchanged with Rosenzweig in 1916. It was a heated and forthright exchange, initiated by Rosenzweig, determined not to let the converted Christian Rosenstock simply ignore his decision to ‘remain a Jew’. In 1913, Rosenzweig had been on the verge of following his cousins, Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg, and Rosenstock into the Christian faith. At the centre of the 1916 correspondence was the meaning of the Jewish and Christian(ised) peoples. Their letters have, unfortunately, usually been considered in the world of Rosenzweig scholarship in a very limited, and anachronistic way, and not recognised as part of a far larger ‘brief’, termed by Rosenzweig the ‘new thinking’. The ‘new thinking’ was and is

intended to be dialogical and tensional. It broke with the subject/object divide and with any notion of truth in which the central concern was to bring different perspectives into an irrefutable concordance.

In the 1916 correspondence, Rosenzweig wrote:

Whereas I have an inclination (I often fear it myself, like Penelope) to shove the whole of history between myself and the problem, and so think with the heads of all the participants in the discussion. Otherwise I should not believe myself (though strangely enough I believe other people when they think directly). Hence, the dialogue method that so annoys you . . .

I believe that *there are in the life of each living thing moments, or perhaps only one moment, when it speaks the truth. It may well be, then, that we need say nothing at all about a living thing, but need do no more than watch for the moment when this living thing expresses itself. The dialogue which these monologues form between one another I consider to be the whole truth. That they make a dialogue with one another is the great secret of the world, the revealing and revealed secret, yes, the meaning of revelation?* (Rosenstock-Huessy 2011: 146–148)

Rosenstock-Huessy would later clarify that Rosenzweig misunderstood his ‘annoyance with dialectic’ for an ‘annoyance with the dialogue method’ (Rosenstock-Huessy 2011: 147, n. 174). So much was he in agreement with Rosenzweig’s insistence upon dialogue, and the inescapable importance of perspective and heritage, that part of the letter just cited formed the epigraph for his *Die Europäischen Revolutionen und der Charakter der Nationen* [*The European Revolutions and the Character of [Nations]*] (1931; 1951).

The greatest systematic fruits of their new thinking were Rosenzweig’s *Star of Redemption* and Rosenstock-Huessy’s unwieldy multivolume magnum opus *Soziologie* (1956–1958), more recently published as *Im Kreuz der Wirklichkeit* [*In the Cross of Reality*], although Rosenstock-Huessy’s two studies of revolutions as well as his *Die Sprache des Menschengeschlechts* (1963–1964) can also lay claim to inclusion. Rosenzweig’s and Rosenstock-Huessy’s books are essentially about ‘peoples’ – how they make and are made by their past, present and future, by what they hold sacred and by the commands of their God(s). In this respect, it can be easily overlooked that this pair – though deeply committed respectively to synagogue and Church – are as much the ‘children’ of Nietzsche’s perspectivism and the ‘will to power’ of peoples as they are of their faiths. They are also guided by Goethe’s insistence that truth is known in its doing and by its fruits. For Goethe, truth was discovered in action rather than by any kind of coherence between ‘idea’ and thing, or by some internal logical consistency. Social energy and biorhythms add another Goethean and Nietzschean dimension that is fundamental to Rosenstock-Huessy and Franz Rosenzweig (although it is invariably overlooked in most scholarship on Rosenzweig), as well as to other new thinkers such as Rudolf Ehrenberg and Viktor von Weiszäcker.

If we have tarried on Rosenstock-Huessy’s involvement in the same ‘project’ as Rosenzweig – something he himself insisted one had to do for

both men if one wanted to grasp them (Cristaudo 2012) – it is to bring out that Rosenstock-Huessy is a thinker for whom responsiveness and dialogue, institutionalisation and circulation, triumph and struggle, war and revolution and perhaps, most importantly of all, speech and incarnation are the real fields of social inquiry. For Rosenstock-Huessy, it is incarnation that binds all these other elements, the word that becomes ‘flesh’. In this respect, the weight he (and Rosenzweig) gives to grammar goes far beyond Nietzsche.

Needless to say, Rosenstock-Huessy is not as famous as Rosenzweig, let alone Nietzsche, but he certainly had an impact, if small, on the philosophy of language, social history and pedagogy in Germany. In the field of reform pedagogy, Hartmut von Hentig showed some interest in Rosenstock-Huessy’s ideas, while Jürgen Habermas and Peter Sloterdijk are among the group of philosophers who have not ignored him entirely (Kulesa 2008). Sloterdijk, for instance, on several occasions promoted Rosenstock-Huessy’s theory of language and his study of revolutions (Sloterdijk 2005). The same can be said about Heinrich August Winkler and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who in a festschrift dedicated to the publisher Wolfgang Beck, when asked to select a single book that changed the authors’ lives, both chose independently Rosenstock-Huessy’s (which in English is) *The European Revolutions: the Character of Peoples and State Formation*.

Although after World War II Rosenstock-Huessy was invited by several German universities to give lectures as a visiting professor, and was awarded academic honours and the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, he did not really make peace with German academia. In Germany, he attracted critical scholars and students like Winkler and Wehler, who would become two of the most influential post-World War II German historians. Both drew upon Rosenstock-Huessy’s theory of revolutions and national identities in their research. Wehler, who was an assistant to Rosenstock-Huessy during his stay in Cologne in the 1950s, became a close friend. While Wehler indicated that Max Weber’s modernisation theory was the most important theoretical inspiration for his own research, he was deeply appreciative of Rosenstock-Huessy’s ability to weave together vastly different kinds of sources to create a full picture of the history of European nations and mentalities (Wehler 2007, 2010). Winkler, like Harold Berman in the United States, applied and developed Rosenstock-Huessy’s theory of revolutions in his books on German and Western history (Berman 1983, 2003; Winkler 2007a, 2007b), and he considered Rosenstock-Huessy’s lectures in Münster in 1957 to have been amongst his ‘strongest impressions’ as a student (Klautke, in Berg and Glassert 2004: 107–108). Hans Heinrich Nolte did the same in his works on world history, and Reinhart Koselleck used the example of Rosenstock-Huessy’s discussion of the conceptual change of ‘Revolution’ for his history of concepts and crises (Nolte 2012: 462 (55); Koselleck 1997: 221, n. 97; Koselleck 1984: 717, 788). Koselleck is also a good example of the link between Carl Schmitt’s and Rosenstock-Huessy’s thought on the development of concepts as representations of politics in history. Thus, it can be said that in social history Rosenstock-Huessy was not marginalised in Germany, although he was mostly viewed and discussed as an outsider (Faulenbach 1983; Leutzsch 2014).

In the United States, his impact was limited to some of his students, most notably Harold Berman, a specialist in Soviet law who moved into the field of the history of European law, and the historian Page Smith. Rosenstock-Huessy's German historical works were not translated into English and by the time he came to the United States he was no longer a practising historian in any conventional sense. Despite his enormous effort to write *Out of Revolution* (1938) specifically for Americans, this great book did not fit any prescribed academic mould, beginning with his decision to present the story in reverse chronological order. His works in English would likely have been mostly forgotten had it not been for his student Clint Gardner who, with the help of Freya von Moltke, founded Argo, a small publishing house devoted exclusively to Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy.

Not surprisingly, Rosenstock-Huessy constantly complained about his fall into relative oblivion after his emigration, although he was the first to note how in matters of influence so much depended upon timing. What he had to say was not in synchrony with the prevailing intellectual tone in the United States, but he believed his time would come. Circumstances also contributed. Dartmouth College was a small institution, geographically remote from major intellectual centres, and without graduate students with whom he could conduct seminars that would disseminate his ideas. In this respect he was truly a *vox clamantis in deserto*, which was, as it happens, the motto of Dartmouth College.

After his arrival in the United States, Rosenstock-Huessy switched from teaching law to history and then to social philosophy – but he did not believe in philosophy as a master narrative, and he almost never engaged at any length with contemporary philosophers. Similarly, he saw religion as the most important key to understanding how we got to the world we now inhabit, whilst judging theology to be too 'abstract' to really penetrate the viscera of faith. And while his ideas were always framed in the context of a universal history, in *Im Kreuz der Wirklichkeit* [*In the Cross of Reality*] he 'outed' himself as a sociologist (though he was just as un-inclined to cite sociologists as he had been to cite philosophers and historians). His sympathy for sociology as a method was nicely summed up when he wrote:

Sociology goes on to differentiate the real (authentic) from the unreal (inauthentic) human being. As soon as it applies this measure, it will discover that authentic man can never pursue just one path in a single direction. The first conquest of the Matterhorn ended in catastrophe; but this occurred on the descent. The way back is part of the way forward, and vice versa. So any path traversed just once in one direction cannot be real or authentic for sociology. Sociology is concerned with well-worn paths; they are ways that have been trodden more than once. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–2009: 1, 17–18)

That human paths have been largely formed by faiths is central to Rosenstock-Huessy's work, and it was also why so many of his more secular contemporaries did not know what to do with a thinker (apart from hoping he would disappear into theology) who spoke of God and the gods, of the Church and

of the faiths that are intrinsic to our historicity and social and political institutions.

Today theo-politics has fast become a field in its own right. The earlier creeds of positivism and behaviourism, or Marxism promoted as a 'science' as opposed to what Walter Benjamin and Rosenstock-Huessy both recognised was essentially a messianic narrative, have long since lost philosophical credibility. Benjamin, it should be noted, deeply admired Rosenzweig, but Rosenstock-Huessy he seems to have rejected as an apostate (Cristaudo 2012: n. 6, 468). Although there had always been social thinkers deeply aware of religion, the cracks in the social sciences that facilitated a wider recovery of the importance of theology in social theory owed no small debt to Jacques Derrida and his revisiting and reappropriation of Levinas. Hence, it is difficult now to think of a social theorist of any stature who does not take religion seriously. One only has to look at the journey of Habermas to realise how far social philosophy and theory has, unintentionally, moved in the direction of the 'new thinking' of Rosenstock-Huessy and Rosenzweig.

But we do not wish to give the impression that Rosenstock-Huessy would fit neatly into a group (who of course all argue violently with each other) consisting of, for example, Žižek, Badiou, Agamben, Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze, Foucault – or notably Jacob Taubes. We single out Taubes because, of all those mentioned, he is probably the only one who really engaged with Rosenstock-Huessy's work. For a year, in 1953, he and Rosenstock-Huessy had an intense and lengthy correspondence (presently being translated and edited by Engelhard Weigl and Wayne Cristaudo) in which he showers Rosenstock-Huessy with accolades, e.g.: 'Heidegger harvests the fruits of the labour that you and Franz Rosenzweig undertook' (8 June 1953); 'those of us who belong to the 1923 generation, know what a deep debt we owe to you' (23 August 1953); 'you posed the important question concerning the theme of society better than all the dwarves and idiots of the different social sciences' (n.d.) and 'Nobody I know knows so much about law and language, nobody knows of the secret vehicle of power, which enters into the most sublime appearances, none could so vividly report the places where power, law, language, and love are intermixed' (13 December 1953)<sup>1</sup>. The last example is followed by a suggestion by Taubes that they work jointly on a 'critique of violence' that could be placed on 'today's agenda'. That Rosenstock-Huessy would not know where to start with such an 'idealist' enterprise is, in part, indicative of the deep divide between Rosenstock-Huessy and the '68 generation, and their mentors such as Adorno and Marcuse, who believed they could help realise a society free from war and the social conditions which facilitate it.

For the '68 generation, the link between fascism and violence was perceived to run very deep, and the desire to exorcise fascistic vestiges and the associated or implicit violence that our social institutions perpetuated was a central goal. For Rosenstock-Huessy, on the other hand, violence was not a

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<sup>1</sup>The letters can now be found in the Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth College. We would like to thank the Taubes estate for permission to quote from these letters.



corrupt seed within an institutional founding – as if equality were the more natural and preferable founding (something implied by the '68 generation's preoccupation with equal power relations and its highly selective political reading of history). Nor was it a matter of 'choice' of behaviours (something also implied by the 68ers belief that our institutions could be relatively easily and swiftly transformed into more egalitarian structures). For Rosenstock-Huessy, violence may be something we need to tame, but we can only adequately do it via the momentum of some kind of providential history (*Heilsgeschichte*). This, he argues, is precisely what was intrinsic in the evolution of Europe: its violence, its horrors gave rise to even more violent and more bloody horrors – wars and revolutions on increasingly expansive scales that ultimately brought about peaceful and more just institutions. The second millennium of European history, with its sequence of revolutions aiming at world transformation, has now drawn the world into the same 'providential logic', or if that sounds too Hegelian, let us just say into one universal history, with its global technologies, administrative, commercial, legal and political systems (such as the nation state). In spite of the blood spent, or maybe because of that sacrifice, there has been an expansion of basic improvements and freedoms for many people on the planet, although these improvements – such as the abolition of slavery, the privileges of real citizenship, the rule of law, humanitarian standards, public education and social welfare – are not distributed evenly, especially outside of the West, where turbulence and bloody conflicts remain. Indeed, Western 'exports', such as the systems mentioned above, frequently have exacerbated the problems. And even within the West, the relentless and disintegrative mechanisms of modernity continue to threaten the prospect of a 'Great Society'.

To say that universal history has not been fashionable with a generation for whom 'rupture', 'difference', 'identity' and such like have served largely as talismans against totalisation would be an understatement. And yet, Rosenstock-Huessy was, as the above citation from Rosenzweig implies, deeply sensitive to the different 'trajects' of different peoples. So much so that it is no overstatement to say that the primary problem he saw confronting 'us' is how to prejectively gather the energies of the vastly different and contradictory trajectories so that we not only survive but can share a future worth having for all.

In an age in which human time has become largely irrelevant to the workplace, and in which it has had little relevance for the kinds of ethical and political narratives that have so shaped the drastic transformations of 'power relations' and moral priorities, Rosenstock-Huessy's sensitivity to protracted periods of time, the tapering tentacles and living social tissues of temporalities and the subconscious depth of our historicity make him a hard person to absorb into any more immediate political agenda. Anyone who takes the weight of time seriously cannot help but concede a truth to the conservative, and Andreas Leutzsch has argued that Rosenstock-Huessy is a conservative thinker, although not in any contemporary political sense. For Rosenstock-Huessy is also a revolutionary thinker, as he indicates in the second chapter of *Out of Revolution*, 'Arcana Revolutionis: To the Revolutionaries', where he says that he allies himself both with the 'conservative revolutionary' and the 'revolutionary conservative' (Rosenstock-Huessy 1993: 24). Whether to be a

conservative or a revolutionary at any given moment is a matter of the urgency of the times.

For Rosenstock-Huessy, we are never able to escape completely the hopes and fears and decisions of the past that are embedded and incubate in our language and institutions, and the pressures of the times which force us to find exigencies toward the future. It is also to say that he realises the revolutionary and the conservative are just caught up in different times, and the one may readily transition to the other as what was once fought for is now held on to, and what was once held on to is now seen as part of the bricolage of hell. Historical time must always be factored in, in defiance of idealism, precisely because what is loveable at one moment may be hateful at the next. Indeed when Rosenstock-Huessy writes his powerful opening to the Preface of *Out of Revolution*, 'our passions give life to the world. Our collective passions constitute the history of mankind' (Rosenstock-Huessy 1993: 3), he is anticipating the formulation that will be so decisive in his studies of wars and revolutions and people-making: 'the great question for mankind is what is to be loved or hated next, whenever an old love or fear has lost its hold' (Rosenstock-Huessy 1993: 4).

Along with theo-politics, 'love', that all-important animating power for Jews and Christians, and subsequently for so much of Western history, has also made something of a return to social theory. The question of whether we are making a world lovable enough to affirm is a serious one. Ultimately, Rosenstock-Huessy forces us to consider this question by exploring the history of the ancients and 'Western man' as an attempt to replace hateful practices and institutions with ones more worthy of the sacrifice and devotion that are essential for social survival and human fecundity.

Space limitations in this special issue do not permit us to undertake anywhere near a full exploration of the many sides of Rosenstock-Huessy. These sides extend not only to the different fields and disciplines mentioned above, but also to his writings on medieval history and law (he was a Professor of Law before leaving Germany in 1933), industrial law, church history, Egyptology, adult education, and the problems of the work place under capitalism (for a complete bibliography, see Van der Molen 1997). One major element of Rosenstock-Huessy's intellectual biography that receives no attention in this collection of essays was his powerful classroom teaching at Dartmouth College from 1935 until his retirement in 1957 and then, for a few years after that, his teaching as a visiting lecturer at universities in California. For a thinker who made incarnation the centre of his life's work, the impact of Rosenstock-Huessy in helping shape the lives of his students should not go unmentioned. The following is written by Norman Fiering, a student of Rosenstock-Huessy's at Dartmouth in the 1950s.

### **A note on Rosenstock-Huessy as a classroom teacher**

The students before him at Dartmouth on any given day, several days a week, numbered between fifty and one hundred and were all males about 20 years old. The lectures, typically lasting some 75 minutes including a short break, were entirely original and spontaneous creations, neither obvious rehashing of what was already available in his publications nor composite recitations on the work of other historians,

philosophers, sociologists, theologians, anthropologists, psychologists or linguists, the disciplines that mostly constituted the lectures in various degrees. The lectures were delivered without notes of any kind, except perhaps for a single tiny card with some reminders to himself. Disappointed by his failure to be received in the United States as a public thinker of the highest order, Rosenstock-Huessy seems to have found in the college classroom a new, private mission, as educator. What he taught, he said, was not for the benefit of his immediate audience directly but for the benefit of society as a whole, and he taught what he believed his listeners would need not at that moment but when they were in commanding roles in society 30 or more years later, in their 50s or 60s.

The style of his presentation was typically fervent, earnest, morally serious, although not without some jesting with the students from time to time. At moments he seemed to be gripped by the spirit and spoke with tremendous force. Whatever the students before him may have thought of the content, there could be no doubt that Rosenstock-Huessy was fully engaged in what he was preaching or teaching. Dry, monotonic, detached academic lecturing lacking in emphasis, he said, left the field open to the demagogues for swaying young minds.

The body of thought captured in these lectures is fortunately not lost to us because beginning in the late 1940s a succession of students, beginning with C. Russell Keep who launched the practice, recorded many of them. Over 400 hours of Rosenstock-Huessy lecturing has been preserved and, some years ago, Frances and Mark Huessy undertook the huge labour of transcribing all of them. The titles of these college courses taught by Rosenstock-Huessy immediately make clear their importance in relation to the total body of his work. For example, there is available in audio almost 40 hours of his course on Greek philosophy presented in 1956. Although he discussed the Greeks in his writing, sometimes at length, obviously there are differences in style and content between oral and written presentations, and content is also shaped by the speaker's perceived audience. In his *Soziologie*, for example, Rosenstock-Huessy was addressing a learned audience; at Dartmouth he was talking to young men with hardly any background in historical scholarship or philosophy. He adjusted to this pedagogical demand masterfully by proceeding slowly, simplifying as necessary, looking for familiar analogies, and cutting back to the essentials, with the result that sometimes in his lectures he enunciated core truths better than can be found any place else in his work. As distinguished from his published essays and books, his lectures made much use of the direct address of the second person: 'You do not know this, gentlemen.' 'No one else will tell *you* this, gentlemen.' Moreover, he digressed freely to a degree that no editor of a printed work would have accepted. So the lectures are rife with interesting, often brilliant, *obiter dicta*. With regard to the Greeks in particular, so venerated in the West, he felt their influence had to be contained in favour of the deeper truths of Christianity. Know thine enemy, which for Rosenstock-Huessy was often the Greek mind.

His course on American social history, 40 hours of lectures presented in 1959, is another topic not replicated fully in any of his printed works. As was characteristic of the man, his idea of social history was not what is usually taught, and who and what he singled out from American history to feature in these sessions, were not the most obvious subjects. Yet it can be taken for granted that however new the territory was to his creative mind, he would be penetrating. His lectures spilled over with insights, ready for someone else to develop.

Most important are his lectures on universal history, a topic that is addressed in various of his published works but nowhere else with as much variation, since he taught this course on several occasions over a period of years both at Dartmouth and in California, each time differently. Here, too, given that in any semester or even a full academic year the actual hours of student contact are relatively few,

much detail that might be found in his publications had to be scrapped in favour of essentials only. The sweep of his teaching of universal history from tribal culture to the task of the third millennium, illustrating his vast learning, was staggering, but most impressive was his effort to frame a narrative for all humankind that told an essentially providential story, yet without even a hint of transcendence. Even the simple fact that the calendar everywhere on earth today records this present year as 2015, putting the advent of Christianity at the centre of human time, by Rosenstock-Huessy's reckoning has to do neither with divinity nor with imperialism or mere accidents, but with the promise of the future inherent in Judaism and Christianity. To put it simply, the human spirit (our euphemism for the holy spirit, according to Rosenstock-Huessy), the gift of speech, which reverberates through millennia, and the embodied word of those willing to sacrifice even life for a better future, is the driving power. For Rosenstock-Huessy, the truth of Christianity's centrality, backed by the revelation of the Hebrew Bible, is inescapable even if, in our secular abstinence, we try to avoid 'B.C.' and 'A.D.' by referring instead to 'C.E.' That we live indeed in a common era is exactly Rosenstock-Huessy's point in his universal history.

Universal history, which gives man direction and orientation and the faith that we will one day create a great, peaceful planetary society, is wholly antithetical, it must be noted, to today's popular academic courses on 'world history' and 'global history', which lack a coherent, inspiring narrative and are trapped in relativism. It is not uncommon these days to hear world leaders pronounce unthinkingly on the importance of being on 'the right side of history', but the phrase in fact has no meaning without an implicit reference to the universal history of mankind.

Several other of Rosenstock-Huessy's college courses of great originality could be mentioned, particularly 'The Circulation of Thought', a mixture of psychology, phenomenology and sociology that is not easily categorised. It deals partly with the stages of mental development in the individual over time, with much attention paid to listening, playing, doubting and protesting; partly with the circulation of thought in society, including education at all levels; and finally the transmission of thought historically, in particular the process by which a singular, individual insight of benefit to mankind over time becomes diluted into a commonplace that everyone knows or thinks they know.

What is perhaps most relevant to note here is that virtually none of this material has been subjected to critical scrutiny by the learned. In Rosenstock-Huessy's case, it cannot be assumed that the best he has to say in classroom lectures is already in his books and articles and can thus be ignored. The fertility of Rosenstock-Huessy's mind was such that his brilliance and perspicacity appears everywhere freshly. That these classroom lectures were never written out or formally prepared, but were extemporaneous addresses, makes the surprises in them all the more to be expected. Relevant thoughts and new ideas welled up as he spoke. Of course, the listener must be prepared, too, for the negative side of this virtue: dozens of untested, dubious assertions, parable-like anecdotes, digressions relating to contemporary affairs, exaggeration, diatribes against the idiocy of the provincial young men he was teaching along with exhortation and advice, and simple, unguarded prejudices spoken in the intimacy of the setting. Nevertheless, one thing may be said for certain: the full measure of the greatness of Rosenstock-Huessy cannot be calculated without careful attention to these startling recordings and the accompanying 7,000 pages of transcriptions, and that will be a long and slow process of recovery.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>For a number of years, until quite recently, Rosenstock-Huessy's lectures were sold by Argo as cassettes. When that format was discontinued as being obsolete, all of the tapes were subsequently digitised as Mp3 files, and in the course of the next

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year or so the lecture audios should be available online. Transcriptions of the lectures were once sold as 8½ x 11" paper cover pamphlets. These transcriptions, no longer available on paper, have been scanned and can now be found on *Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy Collected Works on DVD* (2013), sold by Wipf and Stock, a publisher in Oregon. The DVD, best used with the aid of Lise van der Molen's *Guide to the Works of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy* (1997), contains all of his published work and, excluding letters, a vast amount of unpublished materials.

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