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Charles Darwin University

## Speech, Time and Suffering

### Rosenstock-Huessy's Post-Goethean, Post-Christian Sociology

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Wayne Cristaudo

## Speech, Time and Suffering: Rosenstock-Huessy's Post-Goethean, Post-Christian Sociology

**Abstract** *Five years ago, a new three volume edition of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (to translate) In the Cross of Reality: A Post-Goethean Sociology appeared in Germany. As with the two prior editions of the work (a one volume version in 1925, and a much revised and expanded two volume version 1956/8) it met with almost no critical response. This is perhaps not surprising – and it barely mentions any other sociologists, its approach is highly idiosyncratic, it is as much anthropology and history as it is sociology. Indeed, the second and third volumes mainly focus on the social formations of antiquity, and the role of Christianity and the messianic revolutions of the last millennium in creating a universal history. In this paper I take the relationship between speech, time and suffering as the key to Rosenstock-Huessy's argument for why a theoretical grasp of Christianity as a social power is so important for social theory, and why he sees Sociology as a post-Christian form of knowledge. I also make the case for why Rosenstock-Huessy is an interesting and important social theorist.*

**Keywords:** *Names, tribes, empires, city-states, Israelites, Christianity, revolutions, post-Christian*

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### Introduction

Works that are out of time are sometimes out of time because the constitutive forces of a particular moment are so compelling in their demand for attention, something else that *should be* noticed is ignored. Almost half a century after its initial conception, and in the aftermath of the Second World War, few cared when Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888–1973), at 70 years old, finally saw the release of the two volume presentation of his sociological system as a „cross of reality“: *Soziologie (Sociology)* (Rosenstock-Huessy 1956, 1958): (volume 1 *The Hegemony of Spaces* (1956) and volume 2 *The Fullness of the Times* (1958)).<sup>1</sup>

The *Sociology* did get some reviews in Germany, but they mainly expressed bewilderment about what it was doing. One reviewer, capturing the sentiment of the times, dismissed it as a mere „remnant of the German

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1 The Gormann-Thelen et. al. edition (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–2009) is three volumes. It is this edition that is referenced throughout. All references to the *Soziologie* will be to an unpublished English translation (still in progress). All other translations from German, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

spirit (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 3.813–814)“. To Germans who were largely caught between the alternatives of trying to deny, forget, come to grips with, own up to, and move on from their immediate history, Rosenstock-Huessy’s seemingly archaic concerns, and vast historical sweeps, reaching from the tribes through the ages of the Church to modern times, seemed to bear no relationship to their needs. For his part, Rosenstock-Huessy on the verge of academic retirement, and living in the relative seclusion of Vermont, while using various ideas from the Sociology in his lecture materials to Dartmouth undergraduates, did not write an English version of his magnum opus.

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Matters were not helped by the fact that Rosenstock-Huessy, who had only somewhat reluctantly come to see himself as a sociologist, took little effort in positioning himself within the discipline of Sociology which was then entering its golden age. Then there was the problem of the work having been written over a life-time; its coherence was far from easy to grasp, and if his „knowledge-bank“ was that of an immensely well-read interdisciplinary university professor, his „voice“ was nothing like that of other refugees making their way in social thought in the United States (some of whom, like Buber, and Tillich he knew well, others of whom, Strauss, Löwith, Bloch, Marcuse and Adorno he could not abide). But most problematic of all, his *Sociology* was not only replete with religious language, it was also an attempt to justify and explicate a universal history whose very possibility was deeply indebted to Christianity. In an intellectual environment where anything smelling of religion should be treated „objectively“, or, better, left to theologians, who could safely be ignored as irrelevant for social science, Rosenstock-Huessy, though appreciated by some historians, particularly in Germany, suffered, as he himself reflected upon on the last page of *Out of Revolution* from lack of „fit“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 1993: 758).

To be sure, around the time of the completion of the *Sociology* Rosenstock-Huessy had been invited back to Germany where he taught at Münster and was awarded an honorary doctorate, and a devout group of students gathered around him. But these were small rewards for a man whose book was intended to inaugurate a revolution in the social sciences.

In an earlier life, some forty years earlier, Rosenstock-Huessy had engaged in a powerful polemical „religious“ dialogue with his Jewish friend, the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (Rosenstock-Huessy 2011).<sup>2</sup> But at a

2 The dialogue with Rosenzweig of 1916 was a personal encounter between two close friends. It was frequently acrimonious, as each party stood on the ground of

time when Israel and Jewishness had for so many become synonymous, Rosenzweig and the dialogue he had had with Rosenstock-Huessy was something for a rather small group who were interested in far longer waves of time than might be taken seriously by those so traumatized by the horror that they had just survived.

Although Rosenstock-Huessy had left Germany immediately upon Hitler coming to power, and after the Second World War had frequently referred in his lectures and writings to the Nazi horrors and the extermination of the Jews (most notably in Rosenstock-Huessy 2002; also Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2. 158, 259; 3: 237; Cf. Rosenstock-Huessy 1992), his primary focus was not upon the totalitarian collisions and horrors that dominated the twentieth century, but the broader historical currents and great socio-historical forces and longitudinal waves of world-making faith. For him the world wars of the twentieth century not only formed

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their faith. A common tendency within Rosenzweig scholarship – repeated, for example, by Micha Brumlik at the 2013 Jahreskonferenz des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur über Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888–1973) – has been to completely decontextualize the dialogue and to paint Rosenstock-Huessy as a Jewish apostate (his parents were non-religious Jews by birth), Christian proselytizer and anti-Semite. For a refutation of this position see the only book length treatment of the intellectual relationship between Rosenstock-Huessy and Rosenzweig (Cristaudo 2012a). The key points are as follows. First, once Rosenzweig embraced his Jewish faith, Rosenstock-Huessy had no interest in converting Rosenzweig to Christianity – and he stated this explicitly in the 1916 correspondence – it was Rosenzweig that initiated the „dialogue“ of 1916, wanting his friend to understand the reasons behind his „conversion“. Secondly Rosenstock-Huessy wrote a poem celebrating the outcome of the dialogue, which, for him, was that he had been convinced by Rosenzweig that Judaism was not a form of paganism, but the ahistorical revelation – the eternal star – while Christianity was the ever becoming historical path of revelation. Thirdly, he wrote a highly affirmative review of *The Star of Redemption* (Rosenzweig 2005) in 1921 (Rosenstock-Huessy 2013: Microfilm page: 2–3 Item number: III Reel number: 2). Fourthly, he returned to Germany in 1935 to help launch Rosenzweig's Letters. In that edition, in accordance with Edith Rosenzweig's wishes, he wrote a Preface to the 1916 correspondence (the correspondence being considered so important to Rosenzweig's ideas and development that they were treated as an „entity“ in that edition.) In that Preface, in a non-too subtle dig at what he saw as Karl Barth's failure to support the Jewish people of Germany, Rosenstock-Huessy argued that the dialogue with Rosenzweig of 1916 was the issue of the day for Germans who needed to see how mutually dependent German Christians and Jews were upon each other (this was the core thesis of Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*). Fifthly, in the *Sociology* (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 1. 238–243) and *The Christian Future* (Rosenstock-Huessy 1966: 165–197), Rosenstock-Huessy would argue that Judaism was a truth that constituted one pole of what he called „the cross of reality“: Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism constituted the other three poles. Finally there are countless references by Rosenstock-Huessy to the fact that his and Rosenzweig's thought needs to be taken together as examples of speech thinking, and thus his system and Rosenzweig's are complements.

modern idolatries – the idolatry of the nation, of race, of the leader, of the community, of science, of the economy. „Idolatry“ is not a term with much currency in social science, while it is the kind of term that theologians can cut their teeth on. But Rosenstock-Huessy had little time for theology, and what interested him was the social significance of what we attend to, or what, in more archaic times, we would have expressed by the phrase „the gods we serve“ (cf. Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 1. 382–384). Rosenstock-Huessy was Augustinian enough to grasp that we make reality through our service, and supplications, our dedications and aspirations, through the attendances of our loves. But we also make it out of the stock of possibilities and potentialities that are part of the interplay of the calls and behests we summon up and respond to.

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In this respect Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy was a Christian thinker, just as Rosenzweig was a Jewish thinker – in so far as both thinkers dedicated their lives not only to extrapolating upon the socio-historic meaning of those ways of world-making, but continuing within their respective paths of faith. Thus we would more accurately say that both thinkers were preoccupied with the social activations and world making potencies that came from being positioned in the world through not only two diverse, but inimical and yet mutually interdependent heritages and calls from the future. For future, Rosenstock-Huessy insists (specifically against Schelling’s tripartite view of time in which past is what we know about, present what we cognize, and future what we divine [Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2. 16–21]) has sense and significance when it is appreciated not as the simply grey unknown but the promise of destiny. Past and future become meaningful, actualized, when we respond to them as creatures who have a destiny – and the Christian virtues of love, hope and faith, for him, irrespective of how they are now symbolized or ritualized, are behind the faith that our future so that we can be more than our past. But this can only be appreciated by contrasting the historical flows and interstices that were generated by different venerations and appellations.

In the aftermath of the Second World War there was very little receptivity to the kind of theo-political approach which has been briefly outlined, and which was so central to Rosenstock-Huessy (and Rosenzweig). But with the confluence of identity politics, and post-structuralist emphases upon culture and narrative seeping into social areas which had once been the province of theologians, there is now a far greater willingness, at least outside the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, to take cognizance of the social and anthropological significance of religion as a means of

world-making. In this context, then, Rosenstock-Huessy's sociological insights and the method behind it now sound strikingly contemporary. In what follows I will provide an overview of what is behind Rosenstock-Huessy's sociological system and its Christian and post-Christian character.

## Speech

At the basis of Rosenstock-Huessy's *Sociology* is the central concern of his life: *Sprache* – language, or, as he preferred to call it, „living speech“<sup>3</sup>. It was the one constant that held together an enormous corpus that covered topics as diverse as Egyptology, industrial law, Church history and the work-place. Speech is not simply a tool of description, or a means for communicating ideas or thoughts between persons, as Saussure, in a famous diagram from his *Course in General Linguistics* represents language, as that which passes between heads. It is the creative and redemptive process of sociality and solidarity which designates where, how and when we make our world. Nor does it refer to mere communicative „babble“, or everyday signing, or the stale formulae of the sort which has taken up so much of the effort of linguistic philosophy. Living speech refers to the significant irruptions and formal, declarative, urgent pacts, promises, behests, expressions and articulations that form our sociality (Rosenstock-Huessy 1981: 2–10, 28–3). It declares war and peace; calls forth new endeavors; founds families, clans, tribes, empires, states; affixes roles. In sum, it serves as the institutional seal and stamp of authority, solidarity, or revolt. It is embedded as much in the codes of our sociality expressed through dress – „we enter the social body through dress which represents a temporary body“ – as in what comes out of our mouths (Rosenstock-Huessy 1981: 79). For Rosenstock-Huessy, just as „ritual forever enacts the first victory over speechlessness“, „speech and dress are the continuation of ritual“ outside of the assemblage in which it occurs (Rosenstock-Huessy 1981: 87–88).

Speech is also the root of our unique relationship to time – for we do not simply flow in time, but we salvage time, and we pass it along across generations. Likewise, we do not simply have past, and present and future, but we recall a past, and we respond to a future because we have the grammar to enable us to do so. We do this because of the imploding and exploding pressures and forces that hurl us out of the secure spaces we

3 For other writings on Rosenstock-Huessy and speech see Stahmer's introductions to (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b, 1981) as well as Stahmer 1968, Rohrbach 1973 Cristaudo 2012a, 2012b).

inhabit. Rosenstock-Huessy claims that we ever exist at the intersections of reality, a cross composed of the spatial dimensions of inner and outer and the temporal dimensions of the trajective push of past, and the projective pull of future. Enmeshed within this „cross of reality“ we constantly find ourselves caught between more life or more death, thus our speech „surges in the seam between life and death“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 1981: 84). Thus too our grammar is the manner or mode speech deploys in identifying, creating, occupying and transferring the real.

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The humanly real is unlike any other real; it is saturated with voices from other times which echo around and flow through us, thereby rendering nonsensical any metaphysics of a founding, grounding self of the sort reached by philosophical argument along the lines of Descartes. Speech and grammar are not something extrinsic or accidental to our nature, but they make our nature ours. They are the key to how we participate in the cosmos the way we do.

Taking this further Rosenstock-Huessy argues that societies as well as souls are grammatically constituted. We can see this, he claims, in the professions of complex societies – lawyers, preachers, artists, and scientists – all act in accordance with the grammatical underpinnings that shape their very *modus operandi* within the social order: the lawyers focuses on whether „breaches and offences“ *have been* committed; preachers on preparing our souls for the future; artists with the exploration of our subjective possibilities; and scientists with the structure and nature of the objective world. Likewise he argued that the grammatical moods of the imperative, subjunctive, narrative, and indicative find their social expression and collective forcefulness in politics, literature and the arts, in our traditions, and in the sciences (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b: 187–189).

Against the dominant view of language as a descriptive „tool“ in which we attempt to identify the objects of reality and communicate between ourselves about their significance and nature, Rosenstock-Huessy argues that the imperative is the real basis of communicative association and any social order (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b: 54–57). This has largely been forgotten as people take the sacrifices and commands that make society work for granted – and it is precisely because so many people have taken them for granted, that people become ever less capable of realizing that they too need to make sacrifices for their future. To no small extent, this reflects not only the commercialization of society, but also the favoured grammatical moods of the philosophical consciousness (the indicative – „this is“; and the subjunctive and normative mood – „would that it were y“, which

may then be expressed as the imperative „do y“) that have increasingly permeated society with the social success of „philosophism“, the name, Carlyle astutely coined for the Enlightenment (Carlyle 2002, 14).

Rosenstock-Huessy's grammatical basis eschews privileging philosophical speech and the metaphysical commitments it contrives: we simply do not know what potentialities we can cultivate over time – we and life itself are the incalculable. Our grammar facilitates the birth of what we do not calculate within our-selves. Thus Rosenstock-Huessy emphasizes that a common error amongst philosophers has been to take such a limited register of the soul as the adequate measure of who and what we are. Instead we must realize that our collective and social existence is predicated on the different vistas we open up in the communions that transpire between us; genuine communication is communion. Grammar opens us to the different potentialities of the reality that we are by enabling new vistas and clusters of voices and hearts and souls and bodies: new clusters give birth to new ages and new ages are new worlds. Speech is woven into our world and we are woven through speech – the word literally becomes flesh as we call upon each other, respond to each other, and access powers we would never have known existed were we not able to speak. We are not, Rosenstock-Huessy insists, thinking selves whose destiny is to be more objective about reality, whatever that may be, but responsive creatures, who are transformed through our being called into action and into roles – not „cogito ergo sum“, but „respondeo etsi mutabor (e.g. Rosenstock-Huessy 1970: 2, 10, 12, 14, 65)“. In an undergraduate lecture he once said „Nobody is the source of truth. We are all only in the metabolism“. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2013: 2, Item number: 641, Reel number: 16). And it is this metabolic view of speech and life which is intrinsic to his view of society as a whole.

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For Rosenstock-Huessy the most elemental and most overlooked linguistic unit which society rests upon is the name. Names are etched in a group's historical memory when they seal an event and its concatenations or lay down a future direction via promises, constitutions, treaties, laws and the like. History seen thus is first and foremost not simply a series of actions but of re-membered actions, and the re-membering can only take place when naming has occurred. Our social orientation from the moment of our birth to our death takes place within a myriad of allocations, placements, accrument of talents and powers that transpire because we have the capacity to create, to bind, to affix and disperse, to store and orientate – all processes that naming facilitates. Naming reaches from the most



personal and intimate – the whisper „I love you darling“ – to the most public – „you are a murderer and shall be sentenced to death“, „we declare war“. Naming is intrinsic to our humanity. And intrinsic to how we make the world around us. Yet, somewhat astonishingly, and at least since Plato’s *Cratylus*, and its argument for the superiority of ideas over names, naming has invariably been seen by philosophy as a lesser task than thinking. In the main, philosophy, has considered the majority of people to be thoughtless, thus philosophers also eschew the fact that names – as triggers of meanings, of associations, and feelings, of commitments and enmity, signs of honorific and horrific deeds, defeats and great victories – are thrashed out in time. And they are frequently revisited – not via logic, but through the sifting of memory and artifact, through the re-membling of events on the basis of new hopes, fears and insights. Names always reflect something of the inside, of the emotional response to an event.

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### **Naming and Times**

When Rosenstock-Huessy says „to think means using better names“, (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970 b: 174) he is not thinking like a philosopher or metaphysician who really thinks that any name is as good as another, provided one go about one’s thinking correctly (whatever that may mean exactly – being more logical, more astute in matching image/ experience and argument with the latest scientific knowledge?). Rather he is thinking as a historian and sociologist who sees names as traces of commitment and contestation, as someone aware that a name that, for example, once bore pride among certain members of a group now is much more widely a term of shame, such as National Socialism or Anti-Semite. Names are tested socially/ historically so that eventually their proper place in the gamut of human experiences may be registered. Judgment day occurs every time one epoch breaks with another by condemning to death the names that the earlier epoch venerated. To be sure, there is always someone/ people with its own biography doing the registering, the survivors. Whether the survivors themselves have been worthy of their survival is another matter altogether. The moralist in us may wish to enter here to make this call – but the question of who is moralizing here is one the sociologist may not lightly dispense with. Names continue their weaving through us as we make our world. It is this making that it is the core of Rosenstock-Huessy’s sociological thinking. It is also why his sociology cannot be divorced from history, why the event is as intrinsic to sociology as the identification of social roles. Indeed all roles have emerged over time. Thus the spaces that we take as the context of social action are

themselves the demarcations that transpire from events. Maps are an obvious illustration of events shaping spatiality; maps are territorial testimonies to struggles and outcomes that have transpired within and over time.

For Rosenstock-Huessy the task of social theory is to reawaken us to the meaning of our creative capacities as creatures who dwell in time, who may learn from their experiences over time, commune with others across times and build together in time. The different calendars of human kind, for Rosenstock-Huessy, are invariably the record of those events which have sufficient forcefulness within a community that it celebrates these days. And from the time he announced to Rosenzweig, „I philosophize in the form of a calendar“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 2011: 78), he would use calendars as clues to the events that most mattered in forming communities. However, he was very conscious of the fact that the calendar and holidays had increasingly lost their power as the rhythms of modern life had largely eliminated genuine festivity and days of mourning and celebration.

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Calendars, then, are the corollaries of names, but they are also the means by which some names are paid special tribute. In any case, for Rosenstock-Huessy, our ability to „hear“ the names that are stored within our language is equivalent to our capacity to understand where we have come from and why and how we have come. Thus Rosenstock-Huessy urges: „*Audi, ne moriamur* – listen, lest we die; or: listen and we shall survive“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970 b: 22). This is no relatively straightforward matter. For as names are invariably the outgrowths of political contestations, politics also invariably revolves around renaming. The burial of names is also the burial of our relationship to the past. And that relationship, in turn, will impact enormously upon how we make the future. For Rosenstock-Huessy this is the great problems we moderns face. We have cut ourselves off from much of humanity – and we may well mourn that loss, and romanticize it by romanticizing the past or the indigene. That is, we may not see events and processes of the past for what they were or still are, although we may select from other times to serve our own deficiencies in our own dispirited age. We moderns might frequently romanticize the Other, but we all too frequently fail to see ourselves in the Other, yet that Other really is our kin And to make the Other but the object of our fantasy is as „un-neighbourly“ as making of it an inferior. The confluence of times which modernity has harnessed into one planetary economic system is a story in which we find ourselves inescapably linked with the Other. This idea is central to Rosenstock-Huessy's *Sociology*

and it is the reason why the second volume of his *Sociology* is called *The Full Count of the Times*. For the distinctness of our experiences of forces accrued over time is what makes a people. And those forces stand very much in relationship to social reproduction, in relationship to the range of actions that are undertaken, and called upon each day. Those ways and names, though, can only continue as long as they are sufficiently connected with a people's survival – when socially sacrosanct names inspire hatred, the speech of a people has become diseased (as he calls it) and the accompaniments of diseased speech are war, revolution, crisis or anarchy, and decadence. Of war and revolution, more later, here it should just be emphasized, he means the disintegrated or dis-unified society where „everybody is making his pile, grabbing more than his share. And exploiting his membership in ways unforeseen...in economics, the crisis, the depression, is caused by a lack of cooperation and community“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b: 12).

*Decadence* not only means that people do not have children, it also means that that they do not prove to have the stamina of converting the next generation to their own aims and ends. Decadence is the disease of liberalism today...It is the disease of the „Last Man“ of Nietzsche who twinkles: „What is love: What is a star? What is happiness?“ and blasts the future because he could only enter the future by inspiring the next generation, and this precisely he declines to do. „Decadence“ means to be unable to reach the future, in body or mind or soul. The decadence of an older generation condemns the younger to barbarism. (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b: 12)

Rosenstock-Huessy is no conservative arguing that the old ways and old names must be upheld. Indeed, he insists that our freedom lies precisely in inventing new dwelling places of the spirit where the triumph of love over death may continue. Thus too he says „[s]ocial disintegration is a blessing in disguise since it compels us to wake up“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970b: 12). Catastrophe, though, in the form of the diseases just mentioned is the inevitable accompaniment to a society's failure to love sufficiently – to get the balance of right of sacrifice and desire. Rosenstock-Huessy frequently cites Giuseppe Ferrari's formulation that „love is sacrifice and desire in the balance“, (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 1. 194; 1991: 139) and this formulation provides a diagnostic principle enabling us to assess the relative health or sickness of a society. It is noteworthy how Freud has become so important to social theory in the last fifty years – and our Humanities' disciplines with their emphasis upon identity and desire/ sexuality reflect the very strains and stresses of the contemporary world. For desire and sacrifice (usually reconfigured as ethics, and thus

in my opinion too abstractly and „play-like“ to be helpful) are generally dealt with in total separateness, whereas it is precisely how we combine both that contributes to an order in which love itself is realized and not simply what we enjoy.

When enjoyment alone becomes the underpinning imperative, generational conflict is as inevitable as the ensuing catastrophe which may give birth to a founding that defines itself against the corruption of the old order. This is precisely how the different total revolutions of Europe relate to each other. Each one promising, as Rosenstock-Huessy argues at much greater length and detail in his *Out of Revolution* and *Die europäischen Revolutionen*, that the order it will erect will not include the rotten heritage that undid the prior one – thus does the Russian Revolution position itself as anti-bourgeois, the French Revolution as anti-clerical, the English Revolution anti-monarchical, the Reformation anti-papal, and the Papal revolution anti-imperial. The success of a revolution brings with it a new set of roles and veneration. And within our language we still retain the various creations that have been named in order to hold a particular social body and way of life together. In this respect speech enables us to be heirs to the times – but really *being* heirs means being attuned, knowing how to listen to the interplay of names which call from beyond the grave and beckon us to a future. The men and women who believe that only their time is real time are inviting us to share their shrunken reality. These are Nietzsche's „last men“ – and are they not more prevalent than in Nietzsche's time, blinking up as they do from their profit sheets, and mission and vision statements, and policy documents assuring all that they have their hands securely on the future – though invariably someone else must perform the sacrifice? Rosenstock-Huessy was not uncritical of Nietzsche but he found him a powerful prophet who understood that modernity had no sense of futurity. For Rosenstock-Huessy, Nietzsche and Marx were the real eschatologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – liberal theologians, not to mention liberal societies, had lost sight of that completely („The End of the World, or, When Theology Slept“, in Cristaudo and Huessy 2009, 3–16).

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Every life-way is a solidification of a particular form of social time itself. That is, the patterns of life reproduce a specific set of designations that instantiate the founding act of decision for a group to act in a certain way in order to survive and make its way in the world. The reproductive act is the temporal stamp and social shape of the group living by that act. This is why Rosenstock-Huessy looks at the human story as a story of

temporal decisions which are but the incarnation of speech – the flesh of that speech being the social body which is the institutionalization and thus the consolidation and intergenerational transference of potentialities. All of which for Rosenstock-Huessy is tantamount to history being a tapestry of times, of *time bodies*.

For Rosenstock-Huessy, our richness as a species comes from our connectedness. The corollary of this is that our impoverishment is, if I may put it this way, closely connected with our disconnectedness. For Rosenstock-Huessy, the disconnectedness, fragmentation, and debilitation of modern men and women largely stems from the lack of powers at their disposal, and the root of this is their social amnesia. As he writes in the second volume of *Sociology, The Full Count of the Times*:

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increasingly fewer people live with the undulations of history. Mankind is sinking into a condition of twilight. For our five senses and all time spans shorter than a year leave no effective traces on our consciousness. Only that man can think, who learns to weigh and ponder the difference between „10 years ago“ and „today“. But all our media of mass communication cover up old-acquired experiences so efficiently, that men swim around in a dusk of times without end points, while spaces and their magic keep us spellbound and deceive us about the times (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2. 54.)

Of course forgetfulness is as intrinsic to us as memory, and not all bad. But „it is we who decide what belongs to the past and what shall be part of the future“ (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1970b: 19) and how can we make that decision without an understanding of the woof and warp of our very selves, of the processes which have made us who we are? The great danger is the self-deception that comes from taking the consensuses of our abstractions as the stuff of life that has been poured into or sacrificed for further life. The commodification of the media, the instrumentalization and commercialization of education have all contributed enormously to the substitution of the empty shell of the sound-bite for the more archaic purpose of the name – the potentiality of calling, gathering and transference of energy across time. For names are also testimonies of effort and experience, and as such they are also indexes of sacrifice and temporality – a professional name, such as doctor, lawyer etc. discloses the time that is required to gain the powers that can be drawn upon by the sick, the accused etc. Today, however, in a time where time is increasingly accelerated and we live in the illusion of the relatively timeless (because we forget all the time that has gone into making the technologies which dispose of time) the time of acquisition is, along with the various stages of life, also invariably forgotten. (Although the aspiring professional

certainly knows that effort takes time.) Names now lose their aura as they are more like production line brands stamped by the processes of commercial acquisitiveness, and the accompanying totalizing coalition of social and political/ state forces. Which is to say the forces that now benefit from the process of reification only intensify a problem that Nietzsche had traced back to Socrates and Plato. And Rosenstock-Huessy concurs entirely with Nietzsche's anti-Platonism, providing an even more elaborate diagnosis of Socrates in the first volume of *Sociology* than occurs in Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*. And in keeping with his Nietzschean affinities, Rosenstock-Huessy emphasizes in the *Sociology* that a major task of the work is „to pursue our enemy abstraction“ (Rosenstock-Huessy 200-9: 2. 16).

As we have just indicated the confluence of forces which feed into this are many. And apart from the socio-economic-political forces referred to above are the mechanical processes of modern industrial life, which dissolve the creaturely time that is intrinsic to what we are as human beings into the inhuman rhythms required for production and distribution. The mechanization of modern life rests, of course, upon the mechanistic view of life itself which comes out of the scientific revolution. At the basis of that revolution was a view of time which was subordinate to space – a point amply evident in the metaphysical paradigm reaching from Descartes to Kant; both of whom conceive of time purely in relationship to the mapping of forces in space.

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One and all, the modern mechanistic metaphysicians who embroil themselves in the metaphysical conundrums behind their view of nature as a totality of laws are complicit in making the experience accessible to the scientific understanding the condition of experience itself. There was nothing new in Rosenstock-Huessy's opposition to this – as different as they are neither the Romantics nor phenomenologists accepted that. But his opposition is at the basis of his *Sociology*. And why he calls the first volume *The Hegemony of Spaces*. For while it is „natural“ that we inhabit spaces and that our understanding of life comes through what we experience, it is precisely because of the capacity to overcome the natural predominance of space by our capacity to found new modes of sociality within time that we open up new spaces to inhabit. But we can only do this if we grasp our capacity as time builders and not merely prisoners of spaces we have inherited. For Rosenstock-Huessy, the social spaces (and the forces that are common in the shaping of any social space) essentially break down into those that are safe and settled and which enable

us to „play“, and those that are serious because they are not safely settled. Play takes place in spaces protected by repeatable rules and formalities, where barring accidents, and due to the fact that a performance takes place with time, or is measured by time, time itself conforms to the rules of the game. Serious life takes place in time's own making, in irruptions where beginnings and ends are frequently unpredictable: one has no idea if a return is possible. In serious matters, time is the Rubicon between life and/ or ways of life and death. Of course, great games have a degree of seriousness in the life of the competitor, but the most serious moments in a life imperil relationships, families, territories, nations, empires, and even the peace of the planet. History is made by serious actions.

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Nevertheless, play also has a very serious side. Following Huizinga (Huizinga 1944) and Horace Bushnell (Bushnell 1864), Rosenstock-Huessy argues in *The Hegemony of Spaces* that play generates the reflective capacities which help prepare us for conduct beyond the playground. For Rosenstock-Huessy the dangerous quality of liberal societies is that they become oblivious to the sacrificial conditions that enable play spaces to be secure from the tumult of life. In spite of living in the shadows of a century dominated by two world wars the predominant emphasis of modern liberal democratic societies is one devoted to life as play. Rosenstock-Huessy, like many other critics of liberalism of his generation, anticipates Baudrillard in his view of modernity as a stupefied, narcotized culture of consumers caught up in the endlessness of play. Though, unlike Baudrillard, the trauma and seriousness of Rosenstock-Huessy's own experience of war never leaves him for a moment.

The liberal culture of narcosis is so dangerous because so many people literally waste their time so that the freedom of which they are the beneficiaries is not able to be adequately perpetuated. Freedom is the storage and transmission of time well spent; revolt and wars break out when time is misspent, and generations no longer cooperate across the times. Rosenstock-Huessy loves liberty as much as any liberal, but he does not think that liberalism is serious enough about the conditions of the fruits it loves, largely, to repeat, because of its excessive love of play. The point I think can be neatly grasped if we pause upon a formulation from economists which encapsulates the power of a liberal economic order: „consumer sovereignty“. From Rosenstock-Huessy's perspective, the question is: how durable is such sovereignty if it does not cultivate the conditions for preserving its sovereignty? The insidious danger within liberalism is that its elevation of consumption as the decisive force of social meaning requires that consumption ceases to be but one metabolic moment of the social body. Instead

it is so elevated that it becomes the very meaning of the social body's existence. But to make the social body serve consumption as such is to bring about social vacuity and collapse. For it ignores how we deal with, i.e. spend time, on sacrifice and suffering, as if they were not conditions of life but simply unpalatable epiphenomenon. The transformation we are living through today from a liberal to a corporate state is the result of the elevation of consumption under liberalism to the detriment of liberty itself.

It is this emphasis upon the serious use of time and the intrinsic character of suffering and sacrifice to sociality that underpins what is distinctly illiberal in Rosenstock-Huessy. Liberalism, which is itself the product of war and revolution, substitutes a normative, and hence abstract, domain of rights in order to legitimize its own perpetuity, when in fact that perpetuity as much as its origin is the result of sacrificial blood. While liberalism as an ideology is largely in denial about its own illiberal foundations, not to mention adaptations and compromises with institutions such as the family and religious faiths which may stabilize a liberal society, but which have nothing to do with liberalism, Rosenstock-Huessy is interested in the multiple formations that we dwell in if we are to live in a society strong and healthy enough to nourish us. In other words, Rosenstock-Huessy's is deeply attuned to the various social creations which emerge from the different social formations that have given human beings the ability not only to survive, but to participate in the cosmos in ways, that at their best, still arouse our awe at their inventiveness and brilliance. Thus, in *The Full Count of the Times*, the overwhelming mood behind Rosenstock-Huessy's reconstructions of the forms of life which have enabled humanity to survive and to become conscious of itself as a species with talents and powers capable of building a planetary peace and mediating its vast differences is gratitude: gratitude toward the tribes, the empires, the city-states with their publics, and the „nation of God's elect“, i.e. the Israelites with their synagogue which is also, albeit unwittingly, the prototype of the Church. Each formation has left behind residues of its peoples such as masks and warpaths (the tribes), priest-castes, temples and division of labour (empires), geniuses (poets, philosophers, legislators), the righteous prophet (the Israelites). All opened up different powers of life which we are still heirs to. Further, we are only able to be conscious of being their heirs because they each tended to discover and accentuate qualities of life that are disclosed through the temporal axis that they built their life-way upon. Thus, for example, tribes were especially reliant on the past because they take their orientation from the dead. The empires of antiquity controlled and were controlled by the perpetual



present, as they took their agrarian and ceremonial orientation from the rotation of the stars. The nations/people (*Volk*) anticipate the messianic time of the future – the Jews who were the first people to think of themselves as a people who had been promised a great future by God. And the Greeks marked out a fourth-dimension in which time was fused with space in the public-space. This fusion created the public/ spectators who were able to stand over and above the temporal order of the players, or the heroes sung in poems. The perspective of the spectator provides a place of orientation safe from the perils of life itself, and thus is the pre-condition of so many of the resources that are so fundamental in the formations, pursuits, administrations, technologies, and entertainments of modern peoples. In one schema, Rosenstock-Huessy depicts the innovations of tribes, realms, nations, and (the people of the) muses thus:

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Tribes create families – Members bear a name  
 Realms create classes – Inhabitants practise a profession  
 A nation creates destination/assignment (*Bestimmung*) – souls come to speech  
 Muses create poetry – Men have time. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2, 232)

Regarding the muses, he says:

Until today, the Olympic games, Plato and Aristotle, mathematics, and physics and astronomy, tragedy and comedy, have become indispensable elements of education. Because all education creates time for evasion, it permits us play ... The speech of human thinking (*Gedanken*) is Greek. Each new science furnishes itself with a Greek vocabulary. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2, 229)

It is unnecessary to go further into the detail of the multiplicity of achievements that Rosenstock-Huessy details of tribes, empires (he mainly draws upon Egypt), the Jewish nation and the Greek city-states which he wishes his readers to appreciate so that they may realize how the past is alive within them. Rosenstock-Huessy's socio-anthropological excavation is undertaken in order to reacquaint us with names that now thoughtlessly circulate because we have lost connection with their original meaning and power. Sensitivity to names enable us to understand better the different constituent forces of peoples who inhabit different bodies of times. It is a key condition to any meaningful dialogue between inimical groups, just as it is a key condition to a people's self-understanding as revealed by its own historical journey. In the case of the West, Rosenstock-Huessy believes that the names of „God“, „Jesus“, and „Christianity“ have lost their lustre for most of the population. That is to say that the names which were most venerated and appealed to in the revolutionary transformations

that created the European nations are now largely meaningless. Rosenstock-Huessy insisted that he was a Christian, but he also held that most people in the West have no idea of what is Christian about themselves and what is pagan, thus they have no clue about what they stand to lose due to their lack of memory of what bore them as the Christian sources of much of our reality becomes eclipsed by the „idols“ of modernity: commerce, technology, the nation, and modern secular ideologies, which are insensitive to how our social potentialities have arisen.

### **Christianity, Suffering and the Combining of Times**

Though Rosenstock-Huessy's interpretation of Christianity warrants a very lengthy book in itself, we can convey the essence of his thinking on Christianity succinctly: Christianity was an answer to a deep crisis within antiquity. That crisis was being played out simultaneously in tribes, empires, the (Jewish) nation and the (by now conquered/ enslaved) Greek-world simultaneously at a juncture in which a small group of Jewish revolutionaries broke with all the mores that were constitutive of each of these forms of sociality and undertook a new approach to life. That approach was paradoxical in that it renounced all other forms of life, yet it was capable of being ingested by those very forms and rejuvenating them on new terrains. At the core of this renunciation was the insight that death was a condition of life, that one had to die into new life, and that, as God's creation, humanity was not fixed but plastic. Rosenstock-Huessy saw that Jesus broke with every other elevated type of antiquity—emperor, king, hero, prophet, priest, poet. He had understood that as God's children we are beyond all these types, and each type is but a form of service, not an end in itself. Jesus, for Rosenstock-Huessy, teaches us the infinitude of our potential if we are prepared to renounce the ways of the world and move upon the way of God's love, rather than self-love. The dwellings of the world are blessed if they are infused with love, and but deadly abodes if that love is lacking. Social formations, seen thus, are alive to the extent they are spiritual formations – once the spirit had departed, then it is time to turn and leave and find our solidarity and loves in new forms: *metanoia* is the sign of our freedom (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970 a: 182–190). But it is not only the future and present that is reconstituted in this approach – it is also the past itself. This too is something that, for Rosenstock-Huessy, is uniquely powerful about the Christian approach to life: its solidarity (retrospectively grasped) stretches back from Adam to the end of times as it breathes life into forms once vanquished. In the 1916 correspondence with Franz Rosenzweig the dividing

issue was over the people of eternity (the Jews) and the people of time (Christians). Both would concur there was a fateful interdependency between these two peoples. And Rosenstock-Huessy would concede that Rosenzweig had taught him how important it was that the Jewish people remain a constant reminder of the failure of Christianity to achieve the union it required. Nevertheless, Rosenstock-Huessy remained committed to seeking this discordant concordance, what he called the metanomic society with its underlying tensions and overarching peace (Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. 1993: 689–758). Rosenstock-Huessy also has no illusions about how Christianity and empire cooperated to bring the tribes into the one spiritual realm of what would eventually become the Christian nations. Christianity always operated in a context of tensionality, not the least being due to its foundational spirit of renunciation of violence operating in social contexts in which military authority and might have been intrinsic to the societies in which it took root. The dualism of spiritual and earthly power (even when the overlap of powers has been most theocratic) has been with Christianity from its origin. Likewise, it has also operated in contexts in which all manner of social mores, including folklore, are non-Christian.

Although Rosenstock-Huessy sees the task of Christianity as founding and incorporating a universal history, the possibility of a metanomical society ultimately requires moving outside of the kind of unity that a single faith, such as the Christian faith can provide. Moreover, to the extent that the Christian really be open in its search for unity, it requires a renunciation of some of its most fundamental powers and creations, not the least its own sacraments, symbols and sacred names (Rosenstock-Huessy 1966: 126–127). Along with Rosenzweig (and Schelling before them), Rosenstock-Huessy saw this as the third or Johannine age of the Church, whose modern founder, according to Rosenzweig, is Goethe, who consciously rejuvenates and reconstitutes the alliance between pagan and the Christian (Rosenzweig, 2005: 297–304). The geopolitical penumbra of the world wars was, for Rosenstock-Huessy, Europe exploding beyond itself and dissolved from itself. Potencies that emerged out of Europe's revolutions and wars circulated globally, adapted and radically modified in non-Christian, non-European environments, and together they intensified the facticity of Europe's and the world's post-Christian character. In the *Sociology* Rosenstock-Huessy develops this idea by claiming that the cross of reality in the modern world requires that Christianity be coordinated/ cruciformed with Judaism and Buddhism and Taoism (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 1. 243–247; 1966, 174–191).

Rosenstock-Huessy's appraisal of other life-ways is rather perfunctory, and the schematic renditions of Buddhism and Taoism (though not

completely lacking in insight) suggests that Rosenstock-Huessy has fallen prey to his own systematizing – something he states in the Introduction to *The Hegemony of Spaces* he explicitly wishes to avoid (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 1. 385–386). Nevertheless, what this move shows is a recognition of Rosenstock-Huessy of the need for any „great society“ to pool the great contrary insights of world making that enables peoples to survive the ages. Such a pooling cannot occur within one single dominant modality of a past way of world-making. Yet this very possibility, for Rosenstock-Huessy, is predicated upon the social absorption of the peculiarly Christian contribution to the understanding of time. While it is *The Full Count of the Time* makes the systemic case for this peculiar grasp of time, the following passage from *The Christian Future* Rosenstock-Huessy most succinctly sums up what this view of time is:

Christianity... has shown „how man can be eternal in the moment, how he can act once for all“ .... As a French scholar [Jean Guitton] has written, „The unsurmountable abyss between Greek and Christian thought is the Christian rehabilitation of the unique and temporal event. The moral order is general and abstract to every philosophical or Greek mind. In Christianity the time of every human existence receives a superior quality in its smallest fragments“. ... Man gives his acts an eternal, i.e. a „once-for-ever“ meaning, by throwing his whole personality on the side of life that should now come forward, at each moment of his march through time. But he can select what should come forward, what will make a moment unique, only because one end of time like a magnet draws his heart at each step into the future. The uniqueness of the present derives from the uniqueness of the end. Hence only if history is one can our present-day acts have a once-for-ever meaning. (Rosenstock-Huessy 1966: 71–72)

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The end time thus serves as a resurrecting power. And through its historical devotion to the end time, Christian history reconstitutes already existing social formations as well as ones thought spent. The most obvious and powerful historical confirmation of the power of the Church to conquer a social-form from within was the reconstitution of the Roman Empire itself. Rosenstock-Huessy's faith in Christianity has nothing whatever to do with theological or philosophical disputation, but with the positive fact of the transformation of powerlessness into power, of the impossible into the possible, the invisible into the visible. That process is conspicuous in Constantine's conversion to the faith, initially, of a handful of Jewish riff-raff that emerged in a wretched corner of the Empire in its greatest time of glory. The spiritual conquest of Rome gradually extended to the tribes of Europe. Equally as astonishing is that this faith would then revive, resurrect, redeem past glories of antiquity. First the university was revived, then, as humanism evolved, the entire remaining philosophical and classical literary

tradition. To be sure in earlier phases Christianity had contributed to the destruction of the classical heritage. Rosenstock-Huessy does not for a moment deny, then, that fanaticism exists within the Christian tradition – fanaticism can be found everywhere. But he does argue that the truth of the faith must be seen in the long run in the powers of life it gathers and transmits. This, and to repeat, not the attempts to provide rational sense to the faith is, for Rosenstock-Huessy, the truth of what this faith is – for truth, for Rosenstock-Huessy, as with Goethe, is in the fruits of action, not theoretical consistency or fit between representation and reality. Indeed such a dualism makes no real sense for Rosenstock-Huessy, unless one has already made a metaphysical commitment of the sort that he sees as the disastrous one of scientism and mechanism. In the second millennium the Church would help precipitate tribes into Christian nations. The Church itself would lose power within Europe as many nations broke with Rome and created their own national churches. With the French revolution Christianity itself was seen as the enemy of liberty, equality and fraternity: an amalgam of social ends whose roots, for Rosenstock-Huessy, were, nevertheless, palpably Christian.

I have said in a few lines what Rosenstock-Huessy argues over the course of eight hundred or so pages of *The Full Count of the Times*, and his two studies (similar in content, albeit not in framing) on revolutions are also of similar lengths. And I must emphasize here that the historical/ sociological argument at the core of his work is that the Church laid the ground for a completely new kind of way of life out of the imperial rump and social break-down, war-lordism, and tribalism of Western Europe, that the first „total revolution“ – between Pope Gregory VII and the emperor Henry IV which he called the papal revolution – would be the initial fuse and spark in what would be a millennium of revolutions down to the two world-wars and the Russian revolution. The social formations that are part of our everyday world were the products of revolutions – revolutions that first all took place on Christian soil involving Christian appeals that were made in reaction to the hellish environments that people found themselves in. Hellish environments were not unique to Europe, and, romanticism to the contrary, are all too cross-culturally and historically typical. What was unusual about Europe was that its faith engendered a unique relationship to time and space: its messianic notion of time was, of course, Jewish, and the universality of its solidarity had fragmentary precursors amongst some of the Stoics, but the combination would prove to be fateful. And the revolutionary tradition reaching even to anti-Christian revolutionaries of the French and Russian revolutions built on the same temporal construction and the promise – if not the achievement – of a future of total solidarity.

The lack of that achievement is no doubt conspicuous – but the planetary connectedness we now share is a plethora of testimonies to the revolutions which have yielded the nation state, and the commercial, scientific and administrative powers which make peoples of very different times „now coexist“. Rosenstock-Huessy does not argue that this comes from the moral superiority of the West. Western history not only reads like one bloody dispute and massacre after another, but it was the West that plunged the world into two world wars (even if Japan hoped to reap spoils from the second one). But (contrary to myth and hope) Christianity not only never teaches that good things in the world always and only come out of those who do good – God’s grace is a gift to all – it accepts that evil happens to the best, to God himself. Christianity also teaches that God saves even the sinner. Augustine would provide the formulation of original sin, deeply implicit in the (anti-Roman) idea of only one man also being God on earth. Original sin, a doctrine, typically mocked and misunderstood – contains the existential truth that we are creatures who, in spite of our best intentions, nobility and gifts, are destined of our own accord to „miss the mark“ (*hamartano* – sin). It was also Augustine that paired sin with providence. This is developed by Rosenstock-Huessy who argues that we have little choice but to see history not as progressive in the Enlightenment sense, but as providential. Providence transforms death into life, past suffering into future concordance and conviviality. This does not mean that all suffering is good, nor that we should suffer to be or do good – these kind of philosophical formulations convey the staleness of abstraction. The imperative made by God to Jew and Christian is „love God and love the neighbour“. The suffering comes of its own accord – being in the world is inevitably to be involved in suffering. While Rosenzweig identified the divine declaration of Jewish and Christian redemption as being „love is as strong as death“, (Rosenzweig 2005: 169, 217, 345–346; also to be found in Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 2. 76, 201, 228; 2008–9: 3. 63, 475, 484), Rosenstock-Huessy also finds Christian history being an answer to the question, which slightly varies the formulation, „How does love become stronger than death?“ And he adds:

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So history becomes a great song, Augustine’s *Carmen Humanum*; in its every line, perhaps every tone, becomes a lived human life. As soon and as often as the lines rhyme, love has once again become stronger than death. Then from out of absurd contingencies, from adverse circumstances, from silent events of epoch-making necessities in which a lengthy ingested illness is finally confronted, cross-fertilized (*eingekreuzt*) and consequently overcome. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2008–9: 3, 513)

One great difference between classical thought (and so much modern philosophical, particularly ethical thinking which reproduces it) and

Christianity is that the former tries to prevent evil before it happens – the latter factors in evil as a perennial accompaniment of this world until we are redeemed (i.e. original sin), and then asks of us to make the world with the love that we have out of the evil that has happened. We must love and act in the midst of and out of our common suffering – for our experience tells us that it is unavoidable. Idealism is the delusion that suffering is avoidable – the delusion that we can bypass death. One recalls here Rosenzweig’s great majestic critical sentence that opens the *Star of Redemption* „All cognition of the all begins with the fear of death“ (Rosenzweig 2005: 9). In other words, philosophy is a cosmic leap that attempts to escape what we cannot escape – except, as Plato with such truthfulness consistently put it, by us residing with the ideas rather than life itself. The classical and philosophical works with purity – the purity of its doctrine, of its method, of its ideas etc.; the Christian with impurity – the liar and weakling, Peter, and the accomplice to murder, Paul, are the founders of the Church. Thus, fittingly, Rosenstock-Huessy names one of his works *I am an Impure Thinker*.

We are, then, for Rosenstock-Huessy, beneficiaries of the sufferings and the subsequent historical and social progress achieved by revolutions, which originally took place within a social, political and cultural environment that had been Christianised. Social progress is, for Rosenstock-Huessy, inseparable from social „sin“, the creative response to suffering, and the historical accumulation of modalities of social solidarity and freedom – modalities which are ever threatened by the „sin“ – the selfish unneighbourly behaviours of the society’s members. For Rosenstock-Huessy, the French and Russian revolution overthrow the political authority and power of the original body – the Church – which was founded to universalize the commandment of redemption and neighbourly love. With the success of the secular nation state the symbols and appeals of Christianity have now all but disappeared in its traditional „strongholds“ as activators of the social conscience.

### **Conclusion: Sociology A Post-Goethean and Post-Christian Science**

Rosenstock-Huessy called his sociology a post-Goethean work. Goethe, he wrote, „has made the gospel truths accessible to believers and unbelievers“. „Goethe’s free speech“, he continues, „has found all these truths afresh. So now we can know that the Church had to teach them because they were true whereas before we were asked to hold them to be true because the Church taught them“. (Rosenstock-Huessy 2013: „Tribute from a Post-Goethean“). In other words, Rosenstock-Huessy saw Christianity not primarily as a dogma, but as the true realization of the relationship between

death, survival, love, suffering, historical purpose, and social redemption („Tribute from a Post-Goethean“, 1968, item no. 581, reel 12). Goethe wrote in an age where religious language and symbolism were the common social currency and to the believer who severed speech from deed and worldly experience, Goethe was easily mistaken as a man without religious faith. In our age of secular speech the existential dimension of religious symbols and speech tends to get lost – religious rite, ritual, and symbol/ (including speech) are submerged under the personal dimension of one’s faith. Not surprisingly religion appears to so many secularists as some kind of grotesque fairy-tale. Hence Rosenstock-Huessy can easily appear (as he did to his positivist enemies at Harvard) a religious kook.

For Rosenstock-Huessy the experience of real life – which must include the processes of metamorphosis, including those involving death and life – is the great mystery that implicates humanity in its faiths as much as in its knowledge, in its worships and artistic expression as much as in its material reproduction. When the real experience at the basis of any name or symbol has been forgotten and people simply speak abstractly about matters once held sacred the living spirit has long since departed.

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For Rosenstock-Huessy this is also the case with Sociology itself. Whereas most academicians would see little or no connection between the social sciences which evolved in the West and the Christian culture in which universities since the Middle Ages played a decisive part in social reproduction, Rosenstock-Huessy sees that Sociology itself was spawned in the process of social metamorphosis as the social realities which had formed the symbolic and spoken truths embedded in Christianity now were being poured into new forms. Rosenstock-Huessy argues that Comte de Saint-Simon saw this and that this insight was fundamental to the creation of Sociology as „a system of therapeutics“ which centered around human suffering. This emphasis upon the alleviation of suffering, he claims, contrasts with the liberal and Greek priorities of mind and society:

When Saint-Simon chose the way of the sociologist, with the great catch-phrases, „the crisis of Europe“, „the sufferings of our contemporaries“, „the misery of poverty“, he was seeking to institute a system of therapeutics for the temporal orders it still lacked. In his view, [these were] what Christianity had provided for the spiritual order (i.e., the Church) – a lawful and necessary structure. Science becomes the science of sinners; Christians, suffering human beings. [W]hat a contrast to the pre-sociological science, which seems to be the prerogative of the just man, the educated man, the wise man, the philosophical thinker, the estimable character and the rational mind (Rosenstock-Huessy 2013: „What Is New about Sociology?“. reel 8, item 438, 1)



In conclusion, then, Rosenstock-Huessy was well aware that the West had metamorphosed into a post-Christian society. To the extent that the world wars had to different degrees transposed the social and institutional axes of Western revolutions into all regions of the globe, it was not only inevitable, but desirable that the powers inherent in Christian dogma give way to forms more consistent with the reflexive culture of modernity (in spite of all its pathologies and spiritual blind-allies). (Likewise, it was desirable and inevitable that the store of powers accrued by other faiths also be circulated far beyond their location of origin.) Sociology was one of the important forms of the post-Christian means of opening up the hearts and consciences of members of society to the sufferings of their neighbours. Thus he writes:

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sociology...is bound in with and bound to mankind's condition of suffering. It is not a presupposition-free science. Everything known to sociology is known only because suffering is a fundamental fact. From the very first, her only knowledge is that human beings suffer, that accordingly something is not as it should be. Indeed she can scarcely know anything else...

Saint-Simon remains similarly unshackled by „presuppositionless“ thinking. He grows out of Christianity. His freedom of thought wants to be nothing other than post-Christian. The solidarity of the whole human family is presupposed....

We are scarcely ever up to the mark in our understanding of the enormity of Saint-Simon's and Goethe's truth. But it is our only recourse for transforming minus into plus. If we cannot draw the negativities into our life, human society is lost. Practically none of the answers of Saint-Simon to his questions has any relevance for us today. But in his question we have recognized a spiritual attitude that corresponds to a particular rung on the ladder of the natural spirit – the post-Christian. And now we have to ask ourselves if this principle of a post-Christian science is apt to commit us to sociology. (Rosenstock-Huessy, 2008–9: 2. 46–47)

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## Vejn Kristaudo

Govor, vreme i patnja:

Rozenštok-Hisijeva postgeteovska, posthrišćanska sociologija

### Sažetak

Pre pet godina, novo trotomno izdanje dela *Na krstu stvarnosti: postgeteovska sociologija* (*In the Cross of Reality: A Post-Goethean Sociology*) Eugena Rozenštoka-Hisija objavljeno je na nemačkom. Kao u slučaju prva dva izdanja

dela (jednotomno izdanje iz 1925, i značajno redigovano i prošireno dvotomno izdanje iz 1956/8), i ovo nije doživelo gotovo nikakav kritički odjek. To možda i nije toliko iznenađujuće – delo ne pominje gotovo nijednog drugog sociologa, autorov pristup je izuzetno idiosinkratičan, i mogao bi se svrstati u antropologiju i istoriju gotovo isto koliko i sociologiju. Drugi i treći tom se odista uglavnom fokusiraju na društvene formacije u vreme antike, i na ulogu hrišćanstva i mesijanskih revolucija poslednjeg milenijuma u stvaranju svetske istorije. U ovom radu fokusiram se na Rozenštok-Hisijeve koncepcije govora, vremena i patnje, koje su od centralnog značaja da bi se shvatilo zbog čega on smatra da je teorijsko poimanje hrišćanstva kao faktora oblikovanja društvene stvarnosti toliko značajno za društvenu teoriju, i zbog čega Rozenštok-Hisi vidi sociologiju kao post-hrišćanski oblik saznanja. Takođe ću braniti stanoviše da je Rozenštok-Hisi zanimljiv i važan društveni teoretičar.

**Ključne reči:** Imena, plemena, imperije, gradovi-države, Izraelićani, hrišćanstvo, revolucije, posthrišćansko