

EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY

MAN MUST TEACH

19. April 1959

Roosevelt School, Santa Monica, California

INTRODUCTION

We are indeed fortunate this evening that a visiting professorship at UCLA has brought Professor Rosenstock-Huessy to the Southern California area. He is presently professor emeritus at Dartmouth University in New Hampshire, where he has been associated and teaching there for a number of years in the department of philosophy. I believe his title is a special course there, social philosophy.

Professor Rosenstock-Huessy came to the United States in the mid-'30s, where he was associated with Harvard University for a number of years before going to Dartmouth. He has degrees in law, theology, and history; and previously taught at the universities of Leipzig and Breslau.

His primary interest over all this long career has been with education, and more particularly with adult education. He was instrumental in helping establish the international adult education movement. At the time when the United States was establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC movement, he was consulted and was instrumental in planning and establishing the leadership camp at Camp William James.

I first came to know Dr. Rosenstock-Huessy at second-best, when I collaborated with a student of his, Prof. Harold Berman of the Harvard Law School, on a paper on the practice of law in the Soviet Union. At this time, I came to know the spirit in which his students regarded him. And it was then that I realized something -- it is now that I realize the meaning of a statement that I heard from a former student of his, in saying that he must have saved many students from cynicism.

It's a great pleasure this evening to present to you, to speak on a topic that he has chosen himself, "Man Must Teach," Professor Rosenstock-Huessy.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD IS BEHIND THE TIMES

I

1

Well, I'm glad you gave the applause beforehand.

You may applaud afterwards. Yes.

THE STORY OF A FRIEND IN LOS ANGELES

A friend of ours was living in Los Angeles twenty years ago -- 1939, 1940. She was a widow and had three children and they went to school here.

I ask your forgiveness, Mr..... if I tell the story, and this wasn't in Santa Monica; it was in Beverly Hills.

And she complained -- she was the daughter of a Harvard professor, a very famous man. And she felt, she had no husband -- that her children didn't learn much. So she wrote a letter to the superintendent of schools and said what was the matter.

And he wrote back a letter -- I've never forgotten it. It went verbatim, very briefly, but very poignantly: "Madam, you must forgive us. For the last thirty years, we have not believed in teaching."

2

He did not say "learning"; and he did not say "instructing"; and he did not say "training." But he said, "We have not believed in teaching."

And will you allow me now today to take you quite a way from your Parent-Teacher Association, and from this school, and let me talk about man outside schools, outside all this science and technique of education?

And let us ask if there is not a place for teaching in any normal human being's life, and if it is not important at one time, the more you are teachers yourself, to look at teaching with a fresh eye, as a function as important as *breathing, as singing, praying, dancing, voting, judging, making money, and living.*

3

So my purpose today is not to pose here as a teacher in a professional way, but to talk about the conditions under which the professional teacher can reach the

community, and remain a member of the community by declining to be just a teacher, and by reminding himself that the less he is only a teacher, the more everybody else may be privileged to be a teacher.

Compared with the problem of a mother who has to nurse her sick child, and a nurse: nobody will deny that the nurse is professionally better trained. But I think every one of you will also admit that a mother has certain ways with her child that may put the trained nurse to shame.

The same relation prevails in every activity. When there is music, you have professional musicians. But woe to a country in which music is only made over the juke box, and where the people themselves do not sing.

And this has been my concern all my life, to remain reasonable as a teacher. I have taught since I have been fourteen years old, and not to look at my teaching as more than a communal and very common task of everybody.

4

When God made man, and entrusted us with this strange business of running the show on this earth, He said to us obviously three things. He said

*we should not be born for the day, like a beast;
we shouldn't mate like beasts;
and we shouldn't die like beasts.*

And if you look our physiological deviation from the animal kingdom, it consists in three things, which all will bring us back to the problem of teaching.

The child is not born into the day only, like the beast, because it is welcomed not just as his parents' child, but as coming through long avenues of time in this world as a creature of his maker, who has a special purpose with him, regardless of and the prejudices of his own parents and of his own teachers. He has more to say than just to parrot what his time and the fashions of his day say.

II

1

And so he lives all of a sudden very different from a lion or a fox in a tremendous sequence of centuries and thousands of years under the one condition: that he is taught.

And that the people who speak to him do not speak with the arrogance as though they knew, but with the humility that they hand over. That they tell him what has to

be told. Under this condition, the child, the baby, the newborn child is more than an animal. If it only is a fledgling of his own parents, and with the teachers of his own generation, it is very little.

It's too little.

2

So the parents and the teachers can only make this child into a global, functioning somebody who has the right to economize, and to produce, and to take advantage of all the goods of this earth, if these are avenues of time come to this child, and go through them, and lift this child up so that it can become independent of themselves, and of itself.

So the teaching is the condition under which the baby is not a beast.

3

Then comes the mating process. The animals first grow, and then they mate.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY'S HORSE-BREEDING

And it is a rule which I have myself in breeding horses realized very carefully, that a horse, when you allow it to breed, stops growing, usually.

And in most animals, the thing is very separate indeed: first comes the physical growth, and then comes the mating process. And the animals are unaware of the mating in the sense that it overcomes them. They don't look at each other; it's a passion which blinds them.

If you take a boy and a girl at the age of puberty-- at twelve, thirteen and fourteen - - something very different happens. In our human nature, the incredible thing is that we, after puberty, still grow physically. So that the sap of sex life can penetrate our whole system and can make us into what we would call "humans."

That instead of sex, we can love.

4

So the child at puberty is not a beast, because the teaching the child has received in its youth has now to be transformed so that it must speak out and is impassioned, itself, for years. It must court.

Mating without courtship is not possible. It makes frigid women, if they are not courted. And in a time as ours, where everything is just naturalism, frigid womanhood is only too frequent.

Because courtship is a thing of many, many years, of a decade, perhaps.

You have to learn to love. And you learn it by melting down what you have learned into a wealth of *poetry, of letter-writing, of courtship, of proposing, of singing, of amusing, witty repartee*, or whatever it is. And the beast is eliminated by this sudden reverberation of the sounds we have received, and transforming them, over a decade, and then you are ready to marry.

And where this doesn't happen, divorce is the result.

Must be, because it is just mating without courtship.

So mostly in this country now, as I see it, the second marriages are the real marriage, because the first marriage only serves to learn how to court.

III

1

The third stage, old age, is even more peculiar. When the animal is physically weak, senile, senescent, the younger animals -- as in the story of *Mowgli* in Rudyard Kipling -- band together and hunt down the old bull, and out he goes.

Obviously our society has been saved in many cases by the old men.

I only have to remind you of a man like Cordell Hull, or Secretary Knox, these men who at 78 or eighty stepped forward and did something nobody else would have been able to do. You have been accustomed now to be ruled in this country by sick and retired people.

Because they were the only one that commanded the respect of their compatriots.

2

That is, in old age the power of the man seems to be concentrated in reaching through long periods of time into the future, and to speak in such a way that people in various generations will listen simultaneously. Whereas a man of thirty will anger the older, and will not attract the younger, because he's too much self-centered, he's just too much elbow. The old man has won power to speak in the name of many generations, and to do just this what I mentioned in the beginning for the baby -- to form and make orderly these avenues of long time.

THE STORY OF LINCOLN

When Lincoln said, "Three scores and ten," he founded the Gettysburg Address in this power to be wiser and older than the living. These words of the Gettysburg Address are the mystery of the opening of this address, because he no longer spoke himself. He spoke for all the generations that had gone on before.

3

With this, I may make you perhaps familiar with the research of a famous Swiss biologist of our days, Adolf Portmann, who has pointed out that what I'm saying here is borne out by the strange physiology or biology of man, compared to all the animals.

If we were beasts, the gestation period in the mother's womb would have to be 22 to 23 months, compared to the other mammals. If the animal, that comes out of the mother's womb, should have the same capacity as a young elephant, or young lion cub, the mother would have to gestate the child for 22 or 23 months. Actually, the child is born into this world after nine months, and for the remaining thirteen months, the word, speech, teaching takes the place of purely physical development.

4

This has a tremendous advantage that during these thirteen months, anything that has been said can vary from generation to generation, whereas the lion's cub has to come out of the lioness' womb the same way, the same shape, generation after generation. And so the lion species cannot develop.

THE STORY OF THE outhouse

You and I have been born after nine months into a world that in 1900 is very different from 1950 and from 2000. And therefore, our parents, by the majesty of the word, by the majesty of speaking with a child, and saying, "Go to the toilet," whereas a hundred years before, they had to say, "Go to the outhouse," that this child receives the participation, the partnership in a living, historical universe, that it enters human history, that it is a new child in every generation.

IV

1

Now the one heresy by which teaching has not gotten its due -- and I think it's overlooked where it is really most powerful long before the children go to school --

is this fact, that people in this country seem to assume that children, because they are young, are more modern than their parents. It is one point which I'd like you to consider tonight as absolutely erroneous.

2

Children are only in this far ahead of their parents as by the living word, they learn "toilet" or "rest room" instead of "outhouse." But this comes from the teaching of their parents; and it doesn't come from the physical newness of the child.

The child is behind the times.

And the sooner we realize it, the sooner the child-centeredness of our education can be stopped, the great heresy of our time, which abolishes teaching, and which tells you that the children learn all by themselves without real teachers, and the teachers should efface themselves and only be a comrade and a playmate of the children.

3

You not only condemn all old people by this to the poorhouse and to the lunatic asylum, but you deprive the children of their privilege of being behind the times, of being prehistorical beings.

A child is prehistorical. And it is the word of the teacher -- whoever that is -- who lifts the child up into its own time.

4

And that's called "education."

Education puts a child that is out of time -- like an animal; like a lion's cub; exactly the same like a dog -- puts it up into the true stream of time of this generation. And that is not the child's merit. But when the parents do their duty, the parents' merit, because they speak in the terms that are needed today, and not in the speechless manner the child would grow up.

Look how the child treats the past, and you will see that I'm not exaggerating, that the child is not younger than the historical leaders of the community.

That a student at my university, whom I have to teach at this moment, is far behind Mr. Herter in the understanding of the situation. He's not ahead of Mr. Herter, who is in Paris at this moment.

CHAPTER TWO: TRAINING – INSTRUCTION – TEACHING

I

1

That's an incredible illusion, that children automatically are more modern. They are nothing. They are just brats.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY'S NINE GRANDCHILDREN

I have nine grandchildren. They are brats. They are prehistorical. I have to lift them up into history. They don't reach ever history without teachers.

2

What does a child do?

If you leave a child to its own fantasy, and imagination, and don't overfeed it with toys, artificially made and bought in stores, it will play christening, and marriage, and funeral, in the old days at least, on a farm, it will. And a boy will play with soldiers, war -- I did, at least -- railroads. And in other words, the past comes to the child in the form of play.

A child should play themselves into the history of the race, of the past. And the more it becomes play, the greater danger of course, is that it is played down. And that a wedding, if you play it too often as a child, loses its serious character with your daughters.

Or the war.

3

And if you see that children play with the older forms of history, obviously these old forms have to be offered by the adults. And the child tries to imitate them.

Now anybody who imitates is behind the times. He is not the one who reforms marriage, but who is very proud to understand the old ritual of marriage, and by playing it gets into the hang of things.

4

Now this prehistorical child then is taught in a much wider sense than any system of schools. It is taught by all the mores in his home, by the push-buttons' civilization in which we live. It is taught -- or it is left untaught.

II

1

THE STORY OF STEEL AND IRON

A psychiatrist told me the other day that our modern children, since they do not work with clay, and wood, and grass, but with steel, and iron all the time, and sheet metal, are in great danger of falling sick, because they are not allowed to play themselves into the old ways of our whole tradition, which was wooden, and earthly, and flowery.

And this modern United Steel is only modern, and therefore deprives the child of its biogenetic, slow march into the whole history of the human race.

And if we live in cities and apartments, it is a real question: how far a child is not hurt when at the age of two, it has to do with glass and metal, with which it cannot deal, which doesn't yield, which is not plastic.

Because the genius of a child is, is its plasticity. That's the wonder.

And to remain a child, and childlike means to remain plastic.

2

So giving honor to the child for its genius of plasticity, doesn't mean we blind ourselves to the fact that to be plastic does not mean yet to be an historical being, but just be prehistorical, material.

We however at this moment seem to think that the things that shall make this child *a person, a citizen, a soldier of life*, that such conditions of maturing the child may be called with impunity, "material."

I've heard people say that George Washington and Lincoln were the "material" given to the children in school. Children must be given *aterial*. That is, they must hear their master's voice. They must hear the voices through the ages.

The problem is that they must not master a subject, but must be able to listen.

3

This is a long process. It begins with obedience, and listening, and ends with "*Hearken, Israel.*"

That is, the commands that we can understand divide men. Some people can only understand when the policeman tells them something. That is, of their own generation, of the moment. They are still animals, they are dog trained. They are trained.

4

Whenever we train people, we treat them -- in a good sense, by the way, as well as in a bad sense -- as animals. If I have a trainer for my tennis stroke, this physique of mine, as it is poor or good, is trained to react as quickly and as fast as the instincts of a dog.

So this dog-training would not lead us to consider teaching.

III

1

Then there is a second stage: instruction. In instruction, we do not treat the animal nature in us as being dog-like or elephant-like: to be trained. But we instruct the laity.

The professional knows, and the layman is inexperienced and we instruct.

That's still not the highest degree by which the human being comes into the position of being in history, of sharing the life of the community and the fate of the western world.

2

There is a highest degree.

To teach means to speak to one's successors.

That's to teach, to assume that at one time I shall no longer be able to speak, and he to whom I speak then shall take over and speak in my stead. That means to teach.

And that's why the Apostle Paul is called "*the teacher of the Gentiles,*" because he made them for the first time speak in the same way in which up to that time only

the old Israel, that being able to speak from generation to generations the same truth for thousands of years.

The Gentiles had no such thinking. The Greeks had in every generation a different idea. A philosopher comes along, and something else. A new fashion is started. There is Platonism and Eleatism, and Stoicism, and Aristotelianism.

3

Every decade a new fashion, just as here.

And we are all Greeks at this moment, because we don't teach. Because to teach means to think of the fact that in the next, and the next, and the next generation, the great truth has to be continued. And there have to be successors who speak with the same authority.

4

The teaching of teachers is the essence of teaching.

IV

1

And the same child that you have in front of you, you can treat at every minute in three different ways.

You can *train* it -- you have to train it, I admit. You teach a language, you have to train it in speaking Greek or French, obviously. Nothing bad about training.

But you must know what it is. It means to treat this child only as a member of this community as of this moment.

Then you *instruct*, which means that you let the child know that there is expert knowledge. And then it is allowed in a popular way, popularized science, for example; that's instruction.

But then comes *teaching*. And you can tell a boy of ten that at this moment he's treated as your successor. It's quite a different tone, and quite a different intonation, and quite a different dignity. When just the same child that at this moment you have trained and instructed, is taught.

2

Because at this moment, the teacher and the child are of the same time. And they are in the face of a tremendous responsibility, that the truth must be transmitted.

They then become telegraph posts, through which a tremendous cable runs, from Adam and Eve to the last Judgment Day. And they have the honor to carry this load.

3

And to teach teachers, therefore, is the starting point from which we must begin to think about the highest teaching.

This would be natural if we didn't live in a strange moment of time, in which people try to explain the higher by the lower, in which people think

*that if they know good physics, then they can build on top of it, psychology;
and on top of psychology, morality;
and on top of morality, theology.*

That is, the lower is meant to explain the higher.

4

*Training will never explain instruction.
Instruction can never explain teaching.
Sex can never explain love.
And love can never explain marriage.*

Marriage can explain love and sex, because it shows their true meaning. And teaching can admit instruction where it belongs, and training; but not the other way around.

CHAPTER THREE: LEARNING BY HEART

I

1

All the attempts to try to explain the higher of the lower is destructive of education at this moment.

That's the general idea. You get it in such things as "*group dynamics*" and all these dog-training devices, which have been thought out as treating us first as dogs and then thinking we will become human beings afterwards.

We never will. We just remain dogs.

2

Because this is very simple. It's nothing of my invention. You can all check it yourselves.

In training, the being is taken for what he is in his own life, and time, and place; here. And so usually training is -- in most cases -- from learning a language to hitting a ball -- it is immediately in your physical makeup, as of the moment. Even of your age.

The training wouldn't do you, if you are ten years older or ten years younger. A boy of twenty has to be trained in a different manner than a boy of ten and a man of thirty. And a woman again, differently, for her physical character than the male sex.

So training is limited. It has not the perspective of being valid through all times and for all races.

Instruction divides the world as it is into experts and laity. And therefore, it's concerned again with the society as it is now.

Here are the doctors, and there are the patients; and the patients have to know a little bit about hygiene. So they are instructed, when they come for the blood bank, how to behave.

Teaching is quite different. The teacher is humble. He knows his mortality. He will disappear. The child that is taught will disappear. The child is not very superior.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY IN THE TWO WORLD WARS

I have buried two generations of my own students in two world wars -- and so I know what it means as a teacher to survive the people one had thought that would take one's own place.

We are both, when we teach and when we really learn from a teacher, above these limitations of time and space; the instructor being limited in space, and the trainer being limited in time.

3

We are trying to save the process that has already started before our time, from coming to an end by our obstruction.

It never seems to be mentioned -- although I think all the teachers handle it this way, that when I have a group of students, my only fear is that they might obstruct the permeation of the truth to further generations.

If I have two men, or two women students, let us say, of 22, both engaged to marry, and I know one is going to teach her child to pray, and the other has studied philosophy and therefore hasn't quite found out whether praying is a good idea or not, I prefer the woman who goes on teaching her child to pray before she has found out -- and perhaps she'll never find out -- to the woman who says, "I haven't found out about it; therefore I do nothing with my child," thinking that she does something, when she does very much.

She deprives the child of a right. The child has to be put in contact with the stream with the ages, despite the stupidity and folly of her mother, or of the instructor of her mother.

The idea that "what I give to my students" -- or what you give when you teach English in your school, or arithmetic for that matter, the simplest three R's, to a child -- that you give this to this child so that the child should get something out of it, to my mind may be good for training and instruction; it has nothing to do with teaching.

4

When we teach, we try to save a seed that had been planted thousands of years ago -- like the English language -- from obstruction by the living generation. Whether we understand it or not, they have to pass it on.

I don't care whether the child understands Hamlet. They never do. But they must get that much respect and liking for Shakespeare that they do not prevent the principal

of their school, to put it on the agenda when they are members of the school board. Then they have a respect, and they say, "I never understood it, but it seems to be good."

II

1

Don't you see that your children are today responsible whether history, Shakespeare, Homer, the Bible, anything is taught?

And this is just as important, that they allow their children to know this again, because no one generation has created this universe. It's after all at least six thousand years old. The English language has been created in six thousand years of hard work, and toil. And do you think one generation can decide over its use or non-use?

This is fantastic! The whole idea today is that the generation of the child and the teacher have any right over the truth.

2

But since the arcades of time -- as I like to call them, or avenues of time -- are that which has lifted up us out of the animal kingdom, since this power to give in every generation in these thirteen months after the birth of the baby, *this new language, this new color, this variation* I should say, of all the traditions into this life of this new generation, the responsibility of the older people is not between one generation and the other.

But you all, here -- forgive me, and I myself -- we are responsible in talking to younger people that they know that there have been people before us, and that what we say is true, and thereby has very little to do with us. And it passes through us despite ourselves, willy-nilly.

And we are not teaching in this sense, but we open ourselves up through this stream of the truth.

And mark well: the child must know that it isn't taught this thing to do something with it, or against it, or about it. But to allow it to pass, that it must not die, lest it dies, lest it is forgotten.

3

If you would understand this -- you allow me to say one thing which I think is the greatest starvation I have about children -- they are not allowed to learn by heart.

Now every human being between the age of six and fifteen must fill itself with learning by heart.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY'S WIFE'S GRANDMOTHER

My wife's grandmother always used to say, "If you don't learn hymns, what do you do on a sleepless night?"

4

Now please consider this very seriously. As soon as you know that to teach means to appoint successors in the great stream of truth and wisdom through all thousands of years, and that this generation can block and dam this, or it can lead it on -- like a beaver dam -- then you would not doubt that poetry has always only been poetry as long as it is recited.

If you can't recite a poem, you haven't read it.

That's why our poets today die. Because you may read this doggerel, and it becomes a doggerel for this reason, but you don't learn it by heart.

Now what would be "*To Be or Not to Be*" in Shakespeare if you couldn't say it?

Today. Any occasion.

III

1

All poetry is an attempt to prepare you for the decisive moment when you shouldn't have to write the love letter, and you can't, so you quote a love poem by Keats, and it works.

As soon as you see that teaching has nothing to do with the self of the child -- it's a much greater responsibility -- to anchor this child as a mass, as a carrier of life through the ages, I think learning by heart will come into its own again. It must.

Because we are killing poetry by not learning by heart.

2

How can a poet live -- a drunkard, he had to recite it himself. In a society of ours, where nobody else recited, the poet was driven crazy. And a lunatic he became.

A poet is not there to recite his own poetry. We are there to recite his poetry.

But you let these people come on the stage, pay him a thousand dollars an evening, and ruin them, by allowing them to read their poetry. Why don't you read their poetry?

3

That's why it's written poetry. Because what do poets, what do painters?

They sharpen our senses, they are our tentacles into a space, so that we be renewed. They are our servants. If your taste isn't improved by the painter, he'll have painted in vain.

It's not his taste that has to be improved.

4

THE STORY OF THE ABSTRACT PAINTERS

Since we have acted this way, they are all nuts, these abstract painters. And they have nothing to convey anymore; they are with themselves. It has turned inside. We have destroyed the arts in the very moment when we decided that we had not to be enthused by them, but we had to just take stock of them. And this is this school, and this is this school. And as soon as you divide painters into schools, you certainly do not enjoy them anymore.

School is nothing enjoyable.

IV

1

Now let me come to the point in which I now turn: to the status of the old in our community.

Our life physically is lengthened, and it is as action shortened. People are retired at 62 or 65. The problem of the future will not be the century of the child, it will be the problem of old age.

That's obvious. All these children whom you bring up today will all take you to task if you have not allowed them to prepare themselves for old age. You cannot equip them for being twenty or thirty. You have to equip them for living seventy and eighty years. So you have to fill them with this zest, with this fire, that will not be

burned out when they are fifty, so that they take a revolver and just shoot themselves, or go to have their several nervous breakdowns and go to the lunatic asylum.

Of course, it's not called this way, but it is.

2

How do you fill a child with a long life?

Certainly not by instruction; and certainly not by training.

You can only arouse a child to its highest pitch if you make it feel that one day it will be a parent, and one day it will be a grandparent. That is, that it will be allowed to teach and to bear witness to future generations.

So the first thing a child wants to know is that it is allowed to grow into a situation beyond its school. You cannot make children happy in school, but you can arouse their expectations.

That's why to be child-centered would be all right if you said: the adult in the child is be the center of your teaching, but not the child.

3

THE STORY OF THE OBSTINATE BOY

I have a dear friend whose son was in a way, I mean, not especially intimate with me. And he was a very powerful boy, of Norwegian descent, in this country. And very self-willed, very obstinate. And he had trouble in his first years. He stuttered a little bit. And for a long time he wetted his bed. And it was this terrible obstinacy of his will that obviously caused him much trouble. On the other hand, he was very sturdy and strong, also mentally very gifted from two very beautiful parents; the mother English, the father Norwegian. And when he came to school, he came into one of these strange islands of paradise where the children are made happy, and are forced to be happy every day.

Now to be happy means to have no future, because if you are happy, you don't look out for the future. You are just self-contained at this moment. To have expectations is always a very fearful thing. Think just of the time of your being a bridegroom. That's horror. I mean, until you are through with the wedding ceremonies, because you expect, and fear, and dread the future.

Pardon me, ladies. It's only the male's side.

And expectation is not making people happy. It's a starvation diet. And it's full of wild dreams and anxieties. The night before an examination is nothing of happiness. But it is very important that a child should learn to stand it, because that means to grow.

4

Growth has pains; it has the pains of uncertainty, because we don't take the moment too seriously. It means the willingness of undergoing pain, hardship, and to overcome despair, and not to give up. It means perseverance, the one quality that is obviously absent from the vocabulary of any modern educational textbook.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESILIENCE FROM PHASE TO PHASE IN LIFE

I

1

A child will persevere for very far, distant ends.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY'S SOCIOLOGY

I have now published a book in my 71st year which I started when I was fifteen. So I think I know what I'm talking about.

And I couldn't, if I hadn't been very unhappy in the meantime.

To be unhappy is simply not to be satisfied with what is. And if a child is happy, it cannot grow. It will remain childish. And it seems to be the ideal today that a lady of 72 still can be called a "girl," by a minister and embrace him.

I have seen this happening. The indignities of old age today are so incredible, because they are supposed to remain boys and girls for the rest of their lives.

2

Whereas any decent boy and girl wants to cease to be a boy and a girl as soon as possible. That's what they play with. That's why they play mother and child.

THE STORY OF ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY AS A GENERAL

I was a general at the age of twelve with my toy soldiers.

3

Now in my practical case. I think it has spoiled two years of my life. It was a very serious problem.

When this boy had been a few years in this school of making happy, and not allowing him to expect anything from the far-distant future, this putting down blinders every day had only its one burden, he began to live backward. He began to wet his bed again. And he began to stammer. And I learned from this practical affair -- I had never thought about this problem before -- that if we do not live forward, we live backward.

And many of our psychiatric problems today we have is that our whole civilization treats of course every man as a daily affair; it assigns him a work of the future of which he doesn't know at all.

Think of all the clerks who have to type everything with fifteen carbon copies.

4

Now the more you do this to people, the more they must live backward. The childishness is increasing in our society of older people, not decreasing. And it cannot remain stable. If you do not go this way, go, you must.

Life is process. And it is either relapsing, or going forward.

II

1

THE STORY OF THE SOUTH

We see it with the slavery issue in the South. Two years ago a governor of Virginia was able to write, "After all, we seem not to have lost the Civil War."

That's living backward. If the solution doesn't go forward, you will slide back. This man could speak in public as though it was still once more 1860.

That's a very practical lesson in politics. You have it with every issue in politics. That when it is not solved -- it's hanging fire -- after a while the most obsolete state comes back in. Never think that you can stabilize any situation in society. You can either push it forward to its conclusion, or it will raise its ugly head more and more, as a ghost of the past.

2

THE STORY OF THE RESTORATION IN FRANCE

I had a story yesterday, in my seminar. Perhaps you allow me to quote it. It's just on my mind. I said that the reaction to Restoration in France, in 1815, after Napoleon had been chased out was quite mild. That Louis XVIII was after all trying to vacillate, and not to do too badly. But that in 1829, the Restoration in France had reached such silly proportions, that the revolution was inevitable. That is, for fourteen years, they had gone more and more reactionary. Instead of living forward, they had lived backward.

3

You can cite this in many cases. It is not in the modern textbooks that time very often is going in reverse. You all believe in automatic progress, which doesn't exist. And so therefore you have the idea that the next year cannot be retrograde. This is simply not in our minds today.

I warn you. In any human life, this is just what very often happens with an individual. We see a bride, who is broken-hearted, her engagement is dissolved; she takes life back, back, back.

THE STORY OF EMILY DICKINSON

Emily Dickinson is a case in point, who couldn't live forward when she lost her sweetheart, and lived backward, made her such a lyrical genius, but a very pure angel, but completely unfit to live forward, being stopped short.

4

And as soon as you see life as process, inevitably either reaching forward or being pressed backward, you will see that our children can demand from us to be taught.

That is, the great moment in any child's experience is the moment when it realizes that one day it will have to be the mother against whom it now rebels, or the father against whom it now rebels, that the mantle of the prophet will fall upon their shoulders, that they will be successors. Because all their rebellion, all the issue they take with the orders of the family, take immediately a different aspect if they know that one day they'll have to act in the same responsibility in the same place.

III

1

So please do not protect the children from this experience. If you seclude them in schools, they'll never come to the realization that the father at home is waiting for them to be taken over.

That is, they must be the fathers in his place.

2

But the greatest thing, I think, that your children can demand from you at this moment is that you must teach them that they must teach. That is, regardless where

they are, whether they are professional teachers has nothing to do with it. The honor of a man and woman who are over fifty is that in some way they are teachers. They can teach by model, by example. They can teach by writing, they can teach by speaking. But whatever they do, they are either teachers or destroyers.

That is, they are either blocking, or moving the young into the stream of life.

3

And from what we have to teach our own children, depends their future happiness when they are old, and not when they are young.

*Sure, they have to have a profession;
sure, they have to have skills; sure, they have to be able sports and athletes.*

But as you know, the health bill of an athlete is a very poor one in later years, his life expectation. So I don't think that you can build the education of your children on his achievement as an athlete. What he wants to -- what she, especially, want to be told is that it is still worthwhile to go to school at 45, and their own children will be grown up, and equip themselves intellectually for a new phase in life.

All the resilience from phase to phase in life: this has to be taught.

4

That I think three-quarters of our problems in education -- of juvenile delinquency today, and in our school discipline, and of the curriculum -- come from this fact that we do not dare to take the child out of its momentary situation, and simply say to him, the moment that's our animal nature; that takes care of itself, that's lived by instinct.

CONCLUSION: MORE THAN ONE GENERATION

I

1

We wouldn't need schools, if we all were animals. We need schools because we have to be taught to transfer and transmit the greatness of life as our society has built up over ages, so that at this moment, as far as I see, except in Tibet, there is no shooting war over the whole globe.

It's a tremendous achievement. It has never happened in human memory. We are very ungrateful for the achievements of history, if we just think that we have a hard time. We have a better time than any other generation on earth.

But I think we are jettisoning it, because we think we are the last generation. And we have only one generation to teach.

2

No. The whole problem of teaching is: what will be there in 2100?

And I have always told my students that I do not care what they learn -- the examina-grade or the examination -- in the least, but I'm interested in what they are going to tell their grandchildren in the year 2000.

That was the reason why I had to teach.

3

So this is all I tried to say today, that teaching was a universal, that the future teacher in your children should guide your steps in teaching better.

applause

QUESTIONS

Now do you have any questions that you'd like to address to Professor Huessy? If you would, I think we have a few minutes available for it. Yes.

A

Sir, do you feel that children may be taught to experience failure as well as success in life? Or should the parents try to pad the way for them?

Ninety-nine times we fail, one time we succeed. So I mean any exclusion of failure would only make for another failure. You can exclude this; the child can start a little higher, on a higher level. But then on this higher level, if it is a living being, it would make different, other mistakes.

So what is your question?

Sorry. I have had the general impression that today many parents and educators feel that children should not experience too many failures, particularly in their schoolwork and in social contacts, and say, "Wait." That they should be as happy as possible, and play down the failure aspect.

Well, you already know my answer.

I do think that it is helpful always to keep in mind the doctrine in the instruction of the laity and the teaching. I hate to speak of "failure" and "success" in the abstract. Obviously we live in order to turn liabilities into assets, and failures into successes. And nobody can be successful unless he has undergone so profound failures that something new has been learned by these failures. And he couldn't have known if he had succeeded immediately.

Woe to Mr. Knowland, because he succeeded too early in life, and too often. So out he goes. That's a typical example of no failure, no success.

B

Somehow related to this question: how do you think that a sense of shame enters into proper teaching?

I'm very glad that you mentioned this.

1

Shame is the cover of growth. In every field, be it the poet who plans his work, be it the politician who plans his measure, shame is the cover under which we grow as human beings. That's the difference from the animal and nature in us.

THE STORY OF THE WASTEPAPER BASKET

We can only enter the arcades, the avenues of longer times -- Lincoln can only make his Gettysburg Address in great humility. You know, he threw it away into the wastepaper basket after he had delivered it, and it has been picked out of there.

This kind of embarrassment is the sign of real life. Shamelessness is the great indictment of our age, especially with the young women.

And I have myself recorded a disc, "*Make Bold to Be Ashamed.*" And I won't go into my experience with this. But it makes you very despondent.

2

The Americans in Europe are hated because of their shamelessness. I've given on this disc there an absolutely horrifying example of the behavior of an American student in Heidelberg, in this respect.

It's just indescribable. And as you know, our girls in their discussions of everything sexy, hurt themselves immeasurably.

A person who loves won't speak about things of sex. So the sooner love takes the place of sex, the more shame is saved.

3

I don't know what becomes of this country. I tell you, this is the great concern. Because shame is growth. As any plant has this cover leaf before the bud unfolds, in exactly the same way, our soul has around it this feeling of shame.

It's too early.

Shame means that the timing is felt as the deep problem. When to confess one's love; that's the problem of shame. At one time between husband and wife, this embarrassment ceases. There is no embarrassment. But when?

After the courtship and after the marriage. And then it is all right.

4

Now this is all pooh-poohed today. People think that shame has to be cauterized. The whole recipe of the psychoanalyst is to tell you that shame is unnecessary.

Well, they deliver these people as absolute human rats back into society, pick in their money, having taken up the savings of the whole family. And there they are: *shameless, useless, hopeless, faithless*, but "healthy."

Yes.

C

I just wondered, if you feel that children should acquire fields of knowledge that may not be needed and useful for them. In other words, they should not just ...

Well, I'm grateful for your question, if I may say so. But it really goes quite far. How much time --

I

1

And there are many fields of human knowledge, but they never even touch.

I call this all dog training. This whole fiction that the child can choose its own elective is absolutely nonsense. Before I have been in it, I know nothing about it. It's just purely accident. It's like the choice of college.

2

THE STORY OF THE BOY WHO CHOOSE THE COLLEGE

I had a father who took his boy around five campuses, and then made the boy choose the college according to the size of the kitchen.

It's all fictitious. We make our children believe that they are independent, when we guide them to the water. Here, three offerings, three electives. The child isn't expected to take one.

Purely accidental. Has absolutely no meaning. Would be much better if the child was told, "You take this." Would save so much trouble.

3

THE STORY OF ORDERING THE MENU

I've seen three-year-old children who were asked to decide what on the menu they should order. Of course, the three-year-old ordered lobster.

I mean, this is all nonsense, these choices. It's much simpler; you have a family, and there's one menu, and that's ordered. And so much time is saved.

...know my question, I haven't answered it.

4

There is a tremendous mistake today about the usefulness of learning in a profession. All these so-called professions today are jobs that change from decade to decade. All this preparation for professions is very short-sighted, because what you learn directly as of use, is obsolete before you have learned it, because all schools are always obsolete. Nobody can be quite out in front.

II

1

If you go to the people in political science, they may be as up to date as they want. The main categories they teach are of 1870, and not of 1960. They can't, because teaching means to hand over long-range, development.

2

Now if you treat these poor engineers today. They are in great danger of falling for the Russians. And their system of dog-training is now made the model here for us. Two hundred thousand scientists they have.

Do you think they are scientists?

THE STORY OF DOCTORS AND NURSES IN MOSCOW

A friend of mine just visited Moscow, the president here of a leading university. And came back and said, "Well, what they call 'doctors,' we would call 'nurses.'"

You see, that's by and large this. What else can these poor people going to do?

You cannot be surprised. They have just to produce results.

3

They have a few great specialists, in every field, and the run of the mill then is trained, to serve in a minor capacity. That's just in the medical profession. They make technicians. But not high-grade engineers, except in very small numbers. They have excellent schools on top.

But what you hear of these large numbers shouldn't frighten you.

4

However, my main point is that today, a man is absolutely lost -- *socially, mentally, morally* -- if he cannot have the resilience to see his own job superseded and replaced by an IBM.

Why?

They laugh!

III

1

May I say one thing which may perhaps lead to the core of the question?

At the heart of the school itself is today the superstition that in order to teach mathematics, you can act mathematically. You cannot. You have to enthuse your children.

2

This you do by knowing poetry and the Bible. And you do not do it by knowing mathematics. You can be the best mathematician and quite unfit to enthuse anybody in mathematics.

I have always a quarrel with my mathematical colleagues, who think that by knowing mathematics they already are able to convey mathematics. This is something quite different.

No field is taught by its own method, but by the power of conviction that the teacher irradiates, and emanates -- that emanates from him and begets the younger generation.

And because the younger generation feels that it is treated as the equal, as the successor of the teacher, and therefore is built up.

3

Therefore, all what you say -- pardon me. What people here call the cream, and the gravy, and the surplus is the foundation of this man having the resilience to cope with emergencies, and with changes.

And therefore, I think the practical part of our education is poetry and religion. And the impractical is engineering.

4

I'm just thinking of the practice of a human being, and not of the practice of a factory. For the factory, the man is only valuable because he is an engineer. But the problem of a human being today is to be, despite the fact that he is an engineer, still a human being.

That's not so easy.

D

You must admit as you were saying, they aren't prepared for old age.

And that they know who they are, that they are nobodies. They are sunk.

1

THE STORY OF A BOY WHO STUDIED FIRST THE CLASSICS

I had the great satisfaction -- I have a boy who studied first the classics, one of my students -- and then with me: history, and philosophy, and languages. And then he decided, from family situation -- his father and mother were divorced; he wanted to prove himself. He had lived five years in Europe only with ideas of poetry, as I said, and history, to enter a factory and become an engineer. He is an engineer now.

And of course he has a first-rate problem of adjustment. But yesterday I received a letter from Plainfield, Connecticut, in which he said that he had made a report of a new test machine. And he had written it in plain English. And his immediate boss had said, "We don't say these things in these terms. That's not professional."

And then the upper had again remarked, they wouldn't and, "Oh, I mean, send up this report. People would feel strange about it."

And then the top man read the report, just the same, and sent him back a high praise. And it was the first time that an engineer had written something up reasonably.

It's quite a privilege to have you with us, Professor Rosenstock-Huessy. I feel, and I'm sure that we all feel, it has been a privilege to view with you the process of teaching. I feel I'm beginning to understand what teaching is all about.

CONTENTS

Chapter one: The child is behind the times

Chapter two: Training – instruction – teaching

Chapter three: Learning by heart

Chapter four: Resilience from phase to phase in life

Conclusion: More than one generation

Questions

NAMES

Dickinson, Emily 4

Herter, Mr. 1

Homer 3

Keats 3

Kipling, Rudyard 1

Knowland, Mr. Q A

Lincoln 1, 2

Paul 2

Portmann, Adolf 1

Shakespeare 3

Washington, George 2

THE STORY OF

a boy who studied first the classics Q D
a friend in Los Angeles 1
doctors and nurses in Moscow Q C
Emily Dickinson 4
Lincoln 1
ordering the menu Q C

Rosenstock-Huessy as a general 4
Rosenstock-Huessy in the two World Wars 3
Rosenstock-Huessy's horse-breeding 1
Rosenstock-Huessy's Sociology 4
Rosenstock-Huessy's wife's grandmother 3
steel and iron 2

the boy who choose the college Q C
the obstinate boy 3
the outhouse 1
the South 4
the wastepaper basket Q B

SENTENCES

A person who loves won't speak about things of sex. So the sooner love takes the place of sex, the more shame is saved.

A person who loves won't speak about things of sex. So the sooner love takes the place of sex, the more shame is saved.

A poet is not there to recite his own poetry. We are there to recite his poetry.

All the resilience from phase to phase in life: this has to be taught.

And to remain a child, and childlike means to remain plastic.

If you can't recite a poem, you haven't read it.

No field is taught by its own method, but by the power of conviction that the teacher irradiates, and emanates -- that emanates from him and begets the younger generation.

School is nothing enjoyable.

So the teaching is the condition under which the baby is not a beast.

That's why to be child-centered would be all right if you said: the adult in the child is to be the center of your teaching, but not the child.

The teaching of teachers is the essence of teaching.

To teach means to speak to one's successors.

NOTE OF THE EDITOR

This is the edited transcription of one lecture April 1959.

1

The transcription was made by Frances Huessy – my work are the following changes:

1. Commonplace phrases as “you see”, “so to speak” are eliminated. Where the speaker corrects himself within the same sentence, only the corrected version is kept.

2. *Additions:*

paragraphs,

chapters with titles scooped from the text,

Roman numbers for the four parts of a chapter,

Arabian numbers for the four parts of the parts of a chapter,

titles for the stories – which are marked by color – which communicate either a personal or historical event,

sentences are marked in bold print, which are as a sum of thought and to be kept as taken for themselves,

indices of contents, names, stories, sentences.

2

In this lecture is touched the following encounter with one of Rosenstock-Huessy’s colleagues in the “Hohenrodter Bund”, Wilhelm Flitner (1889-1990). After he gave a lecture in the Volkshochschule Köln I asked him to say something to his experiences with Rosenstock-Huessy, and he said: “Er wollte immer Nachfolger haben.” (He always wanted to have successors.) I was disturbed, I understood that he didn’t give freedom enough to his listeners – which means that Flitner didn’t distinct between Lehrer and Führer (teacher and leader) – his word meant: Rosenstock-Huessy wanted to be a leader, he wasn’t a teacher (at least this was what I heard).

And now here we have this tremendous confession:

I have buried two generations of my own students in two world wars -- and so I know what it means as a teacher to survive the people one had thought that would take one's own place.

Nachfolger (successor) meant this! Successor in time! His successor in Jena was Adolf Reichwein, in 1925, one of those mentioned by Rosenstock-Huessy. And Wilhelm Flitner stayed as professor in Nazi-Germany all the time, remaining in the space of contemporaries and surviving Rosenstock-Huessy by seventeen years!

I am grateful to have found this interpretation of “successors” and understand myself that I didn’t answer Wilhelm Flitner in any way.

Cologne, May 9, 2017

Eckart Wilkens