

## **Rosenstock-Huessy, Rosenzweig, and the Work of Education**

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Educational reform was one of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's lifelong passions, especially regarding what we might today call "lifelong learning"—how to integrate education into the broader rhythms and trajectory of human existence. For Rosenstock, the educational system both expressed and recreated the patterns of fragmentation and isolation that characterize modernity—creating barriers of isolation between generations, individuals, social classes, and disciplines of knowledge.

In *Uncommon Friendships*, I explored how Rosenstock's interest in educational reform represented an expression of his friendship with Franz Rosenzweig on at least two levels. First, both thinkers were repeatedly involved in various educational initiatives and experiments, and both came to focus much of their effort and writing on the topic of adult education. Second, in many of their educational projects, their approaches reflected aspects of their early philosophical engagements on the idea of speech-thinking, or what Rosenstock would come to term the cross of grammar. With all of the divergences between their projects, these commonalities represented, to my mind, the real fruits of an intellectual friendship: a shared conceptual vision which shapes a commitment to forms of goodness that help in the cultivating of humanity.

This essay builds on my earlier focus on the fruits of their friendship, but with a different goal. Here, I will offer a more internal analysis of Rosenstock's work, interpreting both his and Rosenzweig's educational efforts in light of Rosenstock's own later reflections on the character that "planetary" service should take. In *Planetary Service*—published posthumously, in 1978—Rosenstock refigures how work service, such as the Peace Corps, can challenge established boundaries of academics, economy, and the state. He invokes piracy as a form of life that refuses to recognize or remain confined by boundaries. What I will explore here is how piracy signifies a

critical dimension of education, and how this conception may help us to reinterpret the educational theory of both thinkers.

Rosenstock often described his educational work as creating, in William James' words, an "army at war with nature," a phrase easily misunderstood today. As he wrote in "Arbeitsgemeinschaft," an early piece for *Daimler Werkzeitung* (the journal he published for the Daimler factory workers), the law of nature creates oppositional differences that tend toward hostility and destruction. The task of human labor, then, is to unite those elements of life that are opposed, or separate, "according to nature." Work, acting "contrary to nature" (Rm. 1:20), is "spiritual work," because, like the Holy Spirit, it creates a unity out of differences—in which differences remain, but they stand in relation to each other.<sup>1</sup> This spiritual aspect of work illuminates Rosenstock's vision of adult education as a practice by which communities and individuals can enter history and create new possibilities for the future.

## 1. Grammar and the Teaching of Speech

The conceptual vision that guided both Rosenstock and Rosenzweig in much of their work was a focus on grammar or "speech-thinking." Grammatical thinking attends to the differences in the persons, tenses, and modes of speech that comprise grammar. An imperative, as a second-person calling, should be recognized as bearing its own temporality and relation different from both first- and third-person speech. Indeed, both authors would emphasize that it was from being called by others, as "You," that one becomes an I, and thus able to speak and think for oneself.<sup>2</sup> Both Rosenstock and Rosenzweig see the objective, third-person voice as dominant in modernity, leveling the differences in speech. This effaces the address and presence that second-person speech embodies. The objective voice leaves people and elements in isolation, reinforcing the distortions of Cartesian thought which see the "I" as an isolated, self-sufficient monad.

The distorting tendencies of objectivism creep into the teaching of speech, in the standard form of "Alexandrian" grammar. As Rosenstock writes in "Grammar as a Social Science," "In

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<sup>1</sup> Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, "Arbeitsgemeinschaft," pp. 89-90. From the *Collected Works of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy*; subsequent references to this collection will be noted as CWRH.

<sup>2</sup> The best-known instance of this argument is Rosenzweig's discussion of revelation in part II of *The Star of Redemption*, but it is a central aspect of Rosenstock's work from *The Practical Knowledge of the Soul* through many later works.

the Alexandrian list, all persons are put through the same drill. They all seem to speak in the same manner. It is here that the fatal error has crept in.”<sup>3</sup> By learning grammar via tables which abstract from the spoken relations that constitute the soul’s various potencies, we lose sight of the multiple forms of speech and temporality that comprise lived existence. Alexandrian pedagogy thus leads us to see the world and ourselves as fragmented and isolated, mentally legitimating life in an atomized society. The challenge thus becomes finding a form of education that would resist such atomization and vivify the soul.

In the course of their work, both Rosenzweig and Rosenstock developed pedagogies that sought to challenge Alexandrian hegemony. Rosenzweig’s first educational proposal was an open letter to Hermann Cohen, titled *Zeit Ist*, and it was published in 1917. In part in response to his sense of German failure in World War I, he proposed a radical, innovative, and ambitious curriculum for Jewish youth. The proposal was most radical in his emphasis on Hebrew instruction. Years before translating Jehuda Halevi or the Bible, Rosenzweig argued that to read the Bible as a Jew required reading it in Hebrew; to read it in German was, effectively, to read it *as* a German. Moreover, since the prayer-book gives one the “inner life” of Judaism, he saw Hebrew as essential for this aspect of learning as well. As he writes, “And even though in the case of the Bible both possibilities [reading in German and Hebrew] must be admitted, because both Jew and German share in its possession, the language of Jewish prayer is different; of the language of Hebrew prayer we may state quite categorically: it cannot be translated.”<sup>4</sup> For Rosenzweig, developing Hebrew instruction is necessary for building a “Jewish world” that is not just a “preliminary step” toward the broader German culture. For Rosenzweig, one might say that grammatical assimilation to third-person speech runs parallel with the cultural problem of assimilation faced by German Jews.

To counter such forms of assimilation, Rosenzweig argued for teaching Hebrew through its application—the student learns “by its actual use, the Holy Tongue as a living language.”<sup>5</sup> This approach avoids the abstractions and reifications of traditional grammar. Teachers would guide

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<sup>3</sup> Rosenstock, “Grammar as Social Science,” in *Speech and Reality* (Norwich: Argo Books, 1970), p. 100. Rosenzweig’s discussion of the Song of Songs also addresses the ways that objectivist conceptions of textuality distorted nineteenth-century historical criticism of its lyrical dimensions.

<sup>4</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, trans. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1955), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 34.

students through a series of short texts from worship, including the *Shema Israel*, benedictions, and oft-cited scriptural passages. As Rosenzweig points out—somewhat presaging Wittgenstein’s later thought—one learns one’s mother tongue through use, progressing “from its application to the rule.” By beginning from texts, students see how the language lives in liturgical speech—as spoken to God, and within community.

Rosenzweig argues that texts should be selected based upon the Jewish liturgical calendar, so that “the student can be taught the most important customs and institutions related to them.”<sup>6</sup> The calendar serves as an initial, if partial, introduction to biblical history, through festivals and the order of services, but more significantly introduces students to the practice of Jewish culture. Through the calendar, a student’s individual study becomes linked to the life of the community, and to the “eternal” life of the Jewish people, as discussed in chapter three.

More Jewish history could be incorporated into the lessons in the ensuing years of study. Rosenzweig’s goal is to “engage” the stories, not in the “pale imitation” of translation and distant history, but in their “originality and presence.” As he writes, “Instead of the lame words, ‘Where art thou?’ from the Paradise story, and ‘Here I am’ from the sacrifice of Isaac, he [the student] will remember the concise and concentrated Hebrew terms.”<sup>7</sup> He seeks to revitalize history, countering historicism’s tendency to teach it as simply past, relative, and irrelevant. By teaching living speech, one could also make history come alive in the student’s presence, so that students feel called by it. The goal, in later years, is that a student “shall recognize Judaism not only as his own world, but also as a spiritual power to be guarded as such in his own life.” Later years of the curriculum would include midrash, medieval thinkers such as Jehuda Halevi, and Jewish philosophy.<sup>8</sup> Rosenzweig’s curriculum thus integrates a diverse array of theological positions and modes of expression from the Jewish tradition.

Clearly, in spanning such a range of texts, as well as organizing them to cultivate a connection with Jewish worship and community, this is an ambitious educational program. What is most striking is how Rosenzweig’s proposal applies the philosophy of language and sociology that he and Rosenstock had developed over the previous several years. Teaching

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<sup>6</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 41.

language through use, as opposed to Alexandrian rule-based conjugation, was central to this view. The focus on the calendar, as a way of teaching and living history, would prove central to both *The Star of Redemption* and Rosenstock's *Out of Revolution*. Thus, the curricular reforms which Rosenzweig proposed were, to a significant degree, outgrowths of their turn toward speech-thinking and emphasis on the living dimension of history as it is remembered in the community. Ironically, for all of his emphasis on linguistic separation from the German culture, Rosenzweig's dialogue with Rosenstock enabled his pedagogical innovations.

Another central aspect of Rosenzweig's proposal illuminates the intertwining of theoretical, pedagogical, and institutional issues in addressing educational deficits. Teachers for this curriculum would require higher-level training than high school could offer, yet Rosenzweig doubted that the university's conceptual framework would enhance the teaching of speech-thinking and calendrical sociology; if anything, the prevalence of historical criticism and the "science of Judaism" would prove detrimental. While recognizing the scholarly value of "Protestant treatment" of the "Old Testament" [i.e., historical criticism], he says that the extension of this model to scholarly study of Judaism would be dangerous for the community. He gives the following example:

Scholars with great sagacity and erudition, but little understanding and sympathy for the peculiarities of Jewish religious thinking, will then apply their methods to Halakhah and Aggadah, to philosophy and Kabbalah, surprising us with the results of their inner criticism, as they have surprised us in the past ... with the elimination of the Suffering Servant from the great Messianic prophecy concerning the history of the Jewish people and all mankind (Isaiah 40ff).<sup>9</sup>

The problem he diagnoses is source-criticism's tendency to divorce different strands of thought within a text. This loses the sense of how the text, as a whole, lets these different voices coexist and dialectically play off of one another, teaching the community through the redactor's voice. Rosenzweig's concern, then, is that this model of scholarship would fragment Jewish tradition and prevent students from finding the integrity and vitality that he seeks to convey.

Given the inadequacies of existing institutions, Rosenzweig proposed to Cohen the formation of an Academy for the Science of Judaism. This involved professorships in multiple,

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<sup>9</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, pp. 45-6.

complementary disciplines, drawing from both the Orthodox and liberal Jewish communities. Undertaking scholarship with the goal of training teachers for Jewish education, professors at the ASJ would gain independence from the liberal Protestant influences dominant in university circles at the time. These professors would also educate a cohort of “teacher scholars” who would serve a hybrid role: teaching the Jewish youth while receiving enough support that they could devote a significant amount of time to scholarship. This was essential for several reasons: 1) it linked scholarship to the community, making it responsive to the students and the synagogues; 2) it helped to create a common discussion and understanding among the different segments of the Jewish community, and 3) perhaps most importantly, it reconstituted the community’s public intellectual life, as the teachers would be “equal” in status and learning to the rabbi, while serving different roles in the community.<sup>10</sup>

Though Cohen and others were enthusiastic regarding Rosenzweig’s proposal, it lost steam rather quickly, in large part due to Cohen’s death. Over the course of its first few years, while Rosenzweig was its director, it gradually reverted to a more standard academic model, and Rosenzweig left in disappointment in 1920.<sup>11</sup> All the same, it represents an early expression of how speech-thinking could be put into pedagogical practice.

Like Rosenzweig, Rosenstock thought that a reformation of grammatical teaching could restore a living sense of language and history. In Rosenstock’s case, given its centrality to European history and his son’s frustrations, he wrote *Magna Carta Latina* as an alternative approach to teaching Latin. From its opening pages, the reversal of Alexandrian teaching is evident. The pattern of verb conjugation is third person (*amat*), second (*amas*), and finally first person (*amo*). This reversal is entirely in keeping with the approach of speech-thinking, in which one cannot say “I” until called “you” by another. Personal speech thus emerges from the epic, impersonal third person of the past. Rosenstock argues that by treating the persons as basically the same, and overlooking the relational dimension, Alexandrian grammar gives language a false

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<sup>10</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, pp. 51-3.

<sup>11</sup> See Michael Zank, “Franz Rosenzweig, the 1920s, and the email Moment of Textual Reasoning,” in Ochs and Levene, eds., *Textual Reasonings: Jewish Philosophy and Text Study at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 241.

rigidity, impersonality, and mechanistic quality.<sup>12</sup> *Magna Carta Latina* reorders grammar in light of how language is spoken.

Like Rosenzweig, Rosenstock attends carefully to the selection of texts so as to demonstrate these different social forms. As in *Zeit Ist*, the principle is to see language in its use, with short, manageable passages; Rosenstock thus frequently opts for medieval texts. He argues that the traditional preference for “golden,” “pagan” Latin, had the consequence that Latin “is treated as a language separated from all our speech by two thousand years.”<sup>13</sup> On his view, its “death”—the rumors of which were greatly exaggerated—arose with the collapse of medieval church-state structures, as Latin became an academic language. In other words, “pure” Ciceronian Latin arose in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as a historical construct and result of varied shifts in language and culture.<sup>14</sup> In selecting medieval texts, Rosenstock argues that “it is practical to go to the roots of our own life by means of the central Latin texts that any educated member of our modern society should be able to read.”<sup>15</sup> Drawing from Benedictine worship, law and literature, *Magna Carta Latina* unifies the disparate sources of modern life, showing their common linguistic roots. The text also begins with a selection of Latin choral texts, helping to make the liturgy more comprehensible while retaining its traditional form. In its construction, *Magna Carta Latina* thus illustrates how a language adapts and changes in different contexts and interpersonal settings. Rosenstock thus brings Latin into greater proximity and relevance for students, developing their motivation for learning.

Rosenstock’s book demonstrates the significance he gave to the teaching of language: it is in language that we either build or destroy our relations with one another, as well as our connections with both past and future. While these endeavors to reform teaching practice reflect Rosenzweig’s and Rosenstock’s philosophical and theological sensibilities, both thinkers would see further innovation in education as required. Without the development of institutional structure which would allow speech-thinking to flourish, their curricular innovations could only

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<sup>12</sup> See Rosenstock, *Magna Carta Latina: On the Privilege of Singing and Keeping a Language Alive* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1975), p. 24. For more on the problems with the Alexandrian grammar, see “Grammar as Social Science,” in *Speech and Reality*, pp. 98-114.

<sup>13</sup> Rosenstock, *Magna Carta Latina*, iii.

<sup>14</sup> Rosenstock, *Magna Carta Latina*, pp. 194-7.

<sup>15</sup> Rosenstock, *Magna Carta Latina*, iv.

have marginal success. One of their central tasks thus became educating in ways that would integrate and balance the diverse facets of life and community, so as to create both individual and social forms of integration and equality.

## 2. Work Service and Adult Education

Rosenstock's diagnosis of social division was closely linked with his sense of temporal fragmentation. The prevailing focus on space—or, more broadly, on objectivity—leads to an emphasis on classification and division, isolating different aspects of society and life from one another. This suppresses the interplay of generations—the interaction of youth, adults, and elders in what Rosenstock calls “a slow growth through all the seasons of man's life on earth.”<sup>16</sup> It is only if one really speaks across these barriers, bearing oneself both into the world and taking up past and future, that one's speech can be truly present to the moment.

At several seminal moments in Rosenstock's life, the call to living speech led him to move beyond the established paths and frameworks for education and scholarship. As he describes in “Metanoia: To Think Anew,” at the end of the first world war he found it necessary to reject academic, ecclesial, and governmental office, as accepting any offer would make him “a parasite of German defeat.”<sup>17</sup> Rather, he undertook a series of forays into adult education. This section will discuss his work with the Academy of Labor (Akademie der Arbeit) in Frankfurt, and with Camp William James in Vermont. In these cases, Rosenstock sought to address the deficiencies of education, most notably with the separation of intellectual life from labor. In isolation from other social forces and the embodiment of labor, education loses both its goal and its coherence. As Rosenstock would write of the CCC, adult education should “use the student's intellect, the farmer's tenacity, and the city worker's skill, to form a complete model of the regenerative forces in our world.”<sup>18</sup>

Following a discussion in September 1920 of his ideas on education, Rosenstock was appointed as leader of the Academy for its first year, which began in May 1921. The curriculum was wide-ranging, with courses ranging from principles of work and psychology to sociology,

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<sup>16</sup> Rosenstock, “Teaching Too Late, Learning Too Early,” in *I am an Impure Thinker* (Norwich: Argo, 1970), p. 105.

<sup>17</sup> “Metanoia,” in *I am an Impure Thinker*, p. 187.

<sup>18</sup> “Teaching Too Late,” pp. 112.



political economics, law and history. 198 students enrolled, and, in addition to the regular coursework, Rosenstock established “work groups” for student discussion.<sup>19</sup> He taught courses in economics, law, and history.

Almost from the date of his hiring, Rosenstock encountered difficulties and problems. Somewhat socratically, he thought that the students brought with them “unformed concepts” from their work experience, and that the teacher’s task was to draw these out of the students, by involving them in the educational process. In his view, the lack of an established program was a strength, as it created a space for a new sort of interaction.<sup>20</sup> Breaking with the standard model of education, he conceived the Academy as an institute that would bring together academic scholarship and work life, allowing these different human faculties to speak with and learn from one another. Effectively, he sought to create an educational model in which workers would be equal with teachers, rather than a hierarchical model. As he wrote, “The worker should become a co-worker (*mitarbeiter*) in spirit, not a student.”<sup>21</sup>

The work-groups were essential for this plan. In the work-groups, workers would master, discuss, and *teach* a particular topic. They would no longer be students—listeners (*horen*)—but involved in the process. Rosenstock emphasized this aspect of the Academy, as a “counterweight” to balance lectures and create a dynamic dialogue amongst the participants.<sup>22</sup> The model fits, on many levels, with his speech-philosophy: once addressed in lectures, the “hearers” could find their voices and become speakers; through the conversation, different aspects of human life are united, rather than being divided in their traditional roles. Finally, the model creates an integration of work with the intellect, *verifying* intellectual life through the relationship.

As might be expected, many faculty of the Academy were not enthusiastic about having students “verify” their ideas. The work-group model was an implicit challenge to the adequacy and hierarchy of lecture-based university pedagogy. Since Rosenstock’s approach was only

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<sup>19</sup> Otto Antrick, *Die Akademie der Arbeit in der Universität Frankfurt a.M.: Idee, Werden, Gestalt* (Darmstadt: Eduard Roether, 1966), pp. 138-40.

<sup>20</sup> Antrick, *Die Akademie der Arbeit*, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Rosenstock, “Die Akademie der Arbeit in der Universität Frankfurt a.M.,” p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> Rosenstock, “Die Akademie,” p. 151.

vaguely articulated, many faculty who were used to the university model sought to revise the curriculum. Dr. Hugo Sinzheimer, also a law-professor, led the criticism of Rosenstock's leadership. Sinzheimer spoke out about the problems many faculty saw in trying to teach in this new environment, complaining about a "systematic lack in the pedagogical plan." He sought to emphasize lectures as a primary form of instruction.<sup>23</sup> Rosenstock clearly took it personally. In an unpublished essay, he describes how the conflict between him and Sinzheimer threatened to ruin the work of the first year. The deeper problem, however, was that Sinzheimer's proposals for a university-based model restored hierarchy by "making coworkers into students."<sup>24</sup> A university-modeled pedagogy was, in Rosenstock's view, an irreparable error, aligning the Academy too closely with the university and depriving it of its distinctive calling.

Today, from a variety of perspectives, both epistemological and pedagogical, one can conceive justifications for Rosenstock's approach, particularly in terms of the need for diverse learning styles for nontraditional students, and integrating their experience and practical knowledge into the classroom. In later years, he would attribute the conflict to problems with labor unions and Marxists,<sup>25</sup> but the pedagogical conflict seems to have been central. Unable to persuade others of his approach, Rosenstock left the Academy after its first academic year.

Given the focus of other essays for this conference, I will briefly discuss the significance of Camp William James within the broader context of Rosenstock's work. As with the Academy, his work at Daimler, and in the work camps, at Camp William James Rosenstock sought to integrate labor with intellectual life. While working at Dartmouth, he expressed a clear frustration with how the scholarship and teaching of the university failed to give students any sense of direction or purpose.<sup>26</sup> In focusing on the facts, in objectivity, teaching left students aimless and uprooted from their surrounding society. This industrialized students; in Rosenstock's words, it "made our schools factories for the mass. The school withdraws the

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<sup>23</sup> Antrick, *Die Akademie*, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Rosenstock, "An die Mitarbeiter der Akademie der Arbeit," Eugen Rosenstock Archives, 1922.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenstock, "Biblionomics," p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> "Teaching too Late" recounts the stories of several students whose personal struggles shaped Rosenstock's thinking. As he puts it, "But the most precious men are those who hear the cry from the invisible, smell the corruption around them, and live in the future. These we destroy" ("Teaching Too Late," p. 100).

children from private homes to which they never return.”<sup>27</sup> At the same time, while serving as a consultant for the Civilian Conservation Corps, Rosenstock recognized clear inadequacies in the structures of the work program. While giving work to those who were unemployed, their confinement amongst themselves failed to meet any other social or communal needs. If neither education nor labor could cultivate or regenerate social and communal connections, then the industrialization and anomie of citizens would continue apace.

In founding Camp William James, Rosenstock tried to construct an alternative program that would remedy both the deficiencies of service and of adult education. Through work, social events, and meeting the needs of Tunbridge and the surrounding communities, he hoped to rebuild his alienated students’ sense of community. Through conversations, lectures, and interactions with students, he hoped to give the working-class students a different sense of themselves, and transform the social life of the camp in more intellectual ways. As Rosenstock later wrote to Dan Goldsmith, one of the camp members, “The true experience of the work service must be in how to rebuild a community... We implied... that the unemployed individual, in the work camp, must find comrades from all walks of life because he cannot survive his segregation outside of it.”<sup>28</sup>

As with the Academy, Rosenstock encountered numerous forms of outside resistance, most notably from the CCC bureaucracy. However, there were also issues that speak to the limitations of his approach to educational reform on the institutional level. In Jack Preiss’s *Camp William James*, several events demonstrate that some of the workers in the camp saw divisions within the camp structures, in terms of the roles for working-class camp members and the college students, who were given greater authority and leadership roles.<sup>29</sup> There is a tendency, in Rosenstock’s work, to emphasize the social role which individuals will play—and, the significance of that role in the broader union of the social group. There is a Pauline pneumatology at work, in which individuals play different roles within the body of the community, such that the social body as a whole integrates and overcomes the social divisions and hierarchies that would leave people in isolation. While there are valuable aspects to this vision, particularly in terms of challenging the

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<sup>27</sup> Rosenstock, “What they Should Make Us Think,” lecture from CCC meeting at Dartmouth, May 1940 (CWRH).

<sup>28</sup> Letter to Dan Goldsmith, March 14, 1945, in *Camp William James*, p. 224.

<sup>29</sup> See *Camp William James*, p. 156.

social and economic segregations of modernity, it risks restricting individual development or polyphony, in favor of integration and harmony at the social level. As Rosenstock writes in “The Social Function of Adult Education,” “Our [the tutors’] function inside the group as a part of the cellular nucleus dominates over all other tendencies.”<sup>30</sup>

Another, somewhat different problem can be located in this emphasis on social classification. To see the different strata of society as interacting harmoniously, with each contributing in a distinctive and unique way, may rule out certain forms of social conflict and disagreement from the outset. Privileging harmony may, as Sheldon Wolin has argued, ignore the democratic and political potential that conflict and resistance may hold, both socially and individually. For example, seeing workers as “in need of culture” can ignore the aspects of culture and creativity which may be submerged within working-class life. As I shall discuss further in the conclusion, there are competing, conflicting strands of Rosenstock’s thought that may help to counter this emphasis on cohesion and social order, and giving these more emphasis in thinking about adult education may be more constructive.

### 3. The Freies Judisches Lehrhaus

Much as Rosenstock sought to counter alienation and fragmentation of community in his educational endeavors, Rosenzweig sought to integrate Jewish learning with modernity. In his work, he navigated between assimilation with the surrounding German culture, and an isolation of Judaism from its surroundings; either alternative created social and internal alienation, dividing German Jews amongst and within themselves. In founding the *Freies Judisches Lehrhaus* at Frankfurt-am-Main, Rosenzweig envisioned an educational forum that would both enrich Jewish participation in and understanding of the Jewish tradition, and enable participants to engage the broader German culture from their own distinctive religious perspective. In “Toward a Renaissance of Jewish Learning,” Rosenzweig describes a renewal of adult education as a way to integrate and unite diverse aspects of Jewish individual and communal life, which, after emancipation, have become alienated from one another.

In “Toward a Renaissance of Jewish Learning,” Rosenzweig envisions the *Lehrhaus* as creating a space in which these particulars could be harmonized—much like Rosenstock’s focus

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<sup>30</sup> “The Social Function of Adult Education,” p. 16 (CWRH).

on integrating different aspects of community. Rosenzweig sees the *Lehrhaus* as needing an innovative pedagogical approach to accomplish this. Over against a set, fixed curriculum, he proposes a discussion-oriented format: “This movement would begin with its own bare beginnings, which would be simply a space to speak in and time in which to speak.”<sup>31</sup> He argues for a public discussion space, in which the desires of different participants can be spoken, and the *Lehrhaus* can then design programs that respond to these desires. There are two significant aspects to this. First, with the discussion room, a public, inclusive learning space is developed. This avoids the hierarchy of a lecture, and the abstract speech of those whom Rosenzweig labels “stuffed shirts,” who fail to create speaking relations. Moreover, it creates an equality, or interchangeability, between teachers and students: “The teacher able to satisfy such spontaneous desires cannot be a teacher according to a plan; he must be much more and much less, a master and at the same time a pupil...He must be capable of something quite different—he himself must be able to ‘desire’.”<sup>32</sup>

By beginning from “desire,” the public, open discussion creates a bond among the discussants, and brings together different aspects of life and community. “The discussion should become a conversation”<sup>33</sup>—joining those who have been separate or isolated. This “bookless start” can then incorporate other forms of learning (history, text-study, philosophy), but they all develop from its sociality. In breaking with hierarchy, and creating a conversational speech, the *Lehrhaus* would begin to respond to the problems of alienation.

On the basis of this letter, Rosenzweig was invited by Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel and others to found an adult education program in Frankfurt-am-Main. The *Lehrhaus* was formed through the revision of an existing *Volkschule*, which had been run by Eugen Meyer.<sup>34</sup> Rosenzweig described this as a “modern beth ha-Midrash,” a school at once traditional and modern. He named it the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* to signify that all were welcome. Moreover, the curriculum took the

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<sup>31</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> *On Jewish Learning*, p. 69. See also Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 79-80. For a strong interpretation of how this connects with exegesis, see Randi Rashkover, *Revelation and Theopolitics: Barth, Rosenzweig, and the Politics of Praise* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 106-107.

<sup>33</sup> *On Jewish Learning*, p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Nahum Glatzer, “The Frankfurt Lehrhaus,” *Adult Jewish Education* (Fall 1958): 6-7.

vague proposal of *Bildung und Kein Ende* and gave it definition that spoke to Rosenzweig's belief that "nothing Jewish is alien to me."<sup>35</sup>

Rosenzweig's opening address of the *Lehrhaus* describes the rationale for the course of study. The prospectus sets up a sequence of topics—classical, historical, and modern Judaism—with each containing two "opposed" subjects: the Law and the Prophets, Haggadah and Halakhah, and the Jewish World and the Jewish person. Whereas historical approaches separate these elements of Judaism, here these contrasts function dialectically: "The contrasts are put in solely for the purpose of being bridged."<sup>36</sup> The goal, for Rosenzweig, is to discover the inner relation that unites these different aspects of Jewish life, and makes them parts of the whole, both for individuals and the community. To help discover this unity, he also gathered an intentionally diverse faculty. Many teachers are not specialists in the study of Judaism—rather, they include chemists, physicians, and other professions. Rosenzweig argues that the alienation of modern life demands this new approach; for those who experience it (including himself), they must "lead everything back to Judaism."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, teachers who are engaged with the modern world can lead students in integrating this into a Jewish life.

Rosenzweig's other focus with the *Lehrhaus* was the development of work-groups. These ranged from high-level studies, such as a group exploring Cohen's posthumous *Religion within Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*, to introductory Hebrew study. These also provided an alternative learning format, as they sought to be "teacherless teaching" (*Lehrerlose Lernen*), to use Rosenzweig's phrase.<sup>38</sup> The goal was to create a forum in which students who merely listened in the lectures could become more involved.<sup>39</sup> Over the coming years, he would see these groups as the heart of the *Lehrhaus*, more so than the lectures. Indeed, these groups became

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<sup>35</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Rosenzweig, "On the Opening of the Jewish Lehrhaus," in *On Jewish Learning*, p. 100.

<sup>37</sup> Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, p. 98.

<sup>38</sup> Hildegard Feidel-Mertz, "Der lernende Lehrer: Rosenzweigs Schulkritik und die Erneuerung jüdischer Erziehung und Bildung nach 1933," in *Juden im Kassel: Eine Dokumentation anläß des 100. Geburtstages von Franz Rosenzweig*, (Kassel: Thiele & Schwarz, 1987), p. 113.

<sup>39</sup> Brigitte Kern-Ulmer, "Franz Rosenzweig's *Jüdisches Lehrhaus*: A Model for Jewish Adult Education," *Judaism* (1988): 209-10 .

central to the intellectual life of the community, bringing together Martin Buber, S. Y. Agnon, Gershon Scholem, Nahum Glatzer, and many others.

From 1920 until the summer of 1922, Rosenzweig taught in the *Lehrhaus* before his ALS became too debilitating. At the end of 1922, Rudi Hallo took over the operations and direction of the school, though Rosenzweig remained involved. He lectured on a range of topics, including the “Science of God, Man, and World,” an explication of the central ideas of *The Star of Redemption*. What is most notable about these lecture notes is their dialogical format, involving questions and responses, in an attempt to draw students into the topic.<sup>40</sup> To help foster discussion, Rosenzweig also relied upon Rudi Hallo, Rudolf Stahl and Martin Goldner to “lead the chorus of questions,” so as to draw the audience into discussion.<sup>41</sup> As Feidel-Mertz writes, “Jewish learning” was based at all times on dialogue and discourse, that one learn from another.”<sup>42</sup>

The *Lehrhaus* did differ, in some important ways, from Rosenstock’s simultaneous work at the Academy. The differences surface in a letter to Gritli from September 1921. Rosenzweig attended an event with Rosenstock, where workers gave several lectures. Rosenzweig describes a worker’s speech as “horrible,” and criticizes the sort of spontaneous, undirected speech that Rosenstock advocated. He writes that things work better at the *Lehrhaus*, because there are conversations between teachers, which create a structure into which students can enter, rather than an unformed, haphazard discussion.<sup>43</sup> While both emphasize work-groups, Rosenzweig maintains some sense of hierarchy, to give order to the learning. There is clearly disagreement bordering on antagonism between Rosenzweig and Rosenstock at this point; one year later, when Rosenstock had been ousted from the Academy, and was in the process of leaving Frankfurt, Rosenzweig’s tone shifted markedly to a more sympathetic and supportive view.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Rosenzweig, *God, Man and World: Lectures and Essays*, edited and translated by Barbara Galli (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998) pp. 53-61, for a good example of his question-based presentation.

<sup>41</sup> Feidel-Mertz, “Der lernend Lehrer,” p. 113.

<sup>42</sup> Feidel-Mertz, “Der lernend Lehrer,” p. 113.

<sup>43</sup> *Die ‘Gritli’-Briefe*, September 29, 1921. Available at <http://www.argobooks.org/gritli/index.html> .

<sup>44</sup> *Die ‘Gritli’-Briefe*, September 8 1922.

#### 4. The Service of Piracy: Beyond Complementarity

Despite these practical differences, in their endeavors to create new educational institutions, both Rosenstock and Rosenzweig set forth markedly similar analyses of the deficiencies of modern education. To be sure, the forms of alienation and fragmentation which they address differ significantly, and yet both see speech-thinking as a central remedy to these problems. Most significantly, they recognize the importance of linking education with other dimensions of modern life, and constructing communities where individuals can both learn from and speak to others. My own sense is that Rosenzweig's approach, in part because it allows participants to take on multiple roles within the classroom, may have been more effective, not only in terms of calling students forth into speech, but modeling for them the different sorts of interactions that would be possible.

The broader question that I would like to examine, however, is how well these educational reforms modeled forms of service to their communities. Both clearly saw education as a transformative practice, yet neither managed to bring this transformation to fruition on a grand scale. I think this points to an important tension, in terms of the shape of community that speech-thinking enables.

Both Rosenstock and Rosenzweig often emphasize the role that individuals can play within the broader community—that laborers can learn from intellectuals, and can help intellectuals to have a more concrete or embodied form of thinking, or that Conservative and Orthodox scholars can complement one another's views and methods. As mentioned in the discussion of Camp William James, this risks privileging social cohesion over the process of individual development—and, to some degree, imposes a form of harmony or order where conflict, dissent or contradiction may be the reality. To put it briefly, if too bluntly, for all of their concern about the “pigeonholing” of humanity in modernity, there are moments where the same could be said of their approaches to education. Their approaches privilege order over development and growth, and may ultimately restrict the forms of learning and dialogue that could occur.

However, it would be unfair to both thinkers to leave off at this point, as this focus on the balancing of voices or complementarity may serve a very different end. In their writings on history, both Rosenzweig and Rosenstock argue that history encompasses the range of human potential, such that a living understanding of history brings all of these to bear in the present.



Thus, the movement of historical understanding—and thus, we could say, of learning—through different modes of speech and spirit, occurs precisely so as to enable the soul to flourish in the present. A similar point could be drawn from their educational treatises, as it is through internalizing the encounters and interplay of different modes of speech that one can then speak as oneself, and to another. Moreover, it is through the individual’s speech that these potencies are borne into the future, so that others may come to speak as well.

In *Planetary Service*, Rosenstock argues that service must transcend the objectivizing tendencies of modernity. Rather, service requires the encounter between individuals, who meet one another in their names. “No one is involved in the country where he is serving who does not love some inhabitant of the country, calling him by his first and last names.”<sup>45</sup> Names, moreover, convey a significant relation to history: “Bearing your name stops one from just belonging to a class or social stratum and disappearing into it. That’s when a person rises above his social class costume; that’s when his face shows above his clothing.”<sup>46</sup> Names, then, enable the form of “piracy” that Rosenstock advocates, as a form of service to the planet: they allow for relations and speech that cross borders and move beyond frontiers, refusing to be confined by social order or classification. As a face-to-face encounter, the naming of others—and being named by them—allows for the emergence of new forms of relations and community, transcending classification and the borders of nature. Pirates, who “forego waiting for or hoping for recognition by society”<sup>47</sup> enable the recognition of *individuals* by one another. As Rosenstock suggests, such encounter does not simply leave the past behind. Rather, it overcomes borders by bearing the multiple voices and potentials of one’s history. Real speech, like real peace, extends through three generations; one speaks not only for oneself, but also to create the possibility for future generations to learn and speak as well. As Rosenstock puts it, “True education, however, enables man to survive the limitations and follies of his age and to enter the next.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Rosenstock, *Planetary Service: A Way Into the Third Millenium*, translated by Mark Huessy and Freya Von Moltke (Norwich: Argo, 1978), p. 94.

<sup>46</sup> *Planetary Service*, p. 94.

<sup>47</sup> *Planetary Service*, p. 79.

<sup>48</sup> “Teaching Too Late, Learning Too Early,” p. 108.

What I would suggest, to close, is that this conception of planetary service as going beyond one's borders, bearing history without being confined by it, reshapes the goals of education in ways that counter the restrictive elements of Rosenstock's and Rosenzweig's conceptions of education. If social transformation can only come about through the speech and relations of individuals, then planetary service reorients the social focus that predominates in their educational endeavors, allowing for greater dynamism and interaction. Perhaps it is in reading Rosenstock and Rosenzweig as "educational pirates" that the transformative potential of their endeavors can speak to us today.