

## Rosenstock-Huessy's "Cross of Reality" and Systems Theory

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On pull-down menu, jump to category: Systems Theory and Philosophy

1

## Abstract

- This paper is a systems theoretic examination of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy's "cross of reality," a structure that fuses a vertical spatial dyad of inner-outer and a horizontal temporal dyad of past-future into a space-time tetrad.
- This tetrad is compatible not only with the "human-centered" phenomenological point of view that Rosenstock-Huessy favors, but also with a "world-centered" scientific point of view.
- It is applied by him explicitly or implicitly to a wide variety of individual and collective human experiences.
- In this paper I mention a few examples of these applications from the realm of language, religion, and social critique. I also show that Rosenstock-Huessy's tetradic structure accords with and diagrams some basic concepts in systems theory.

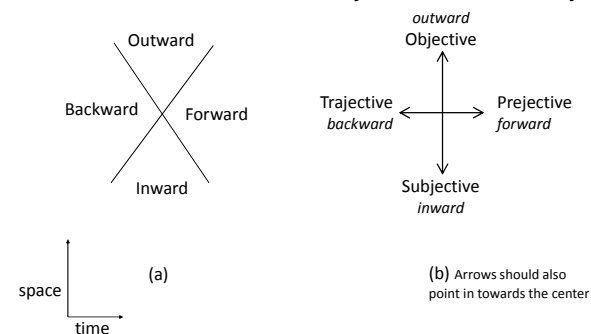
2

## • Introduction

- Cross of Reality
- Affinity to Systems Theory
- Summary
- Acknowledgement
- References

3

Figure 1 Rosenstock-Huessy's cross of reality



(a) Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen (2017). *In the Cross of Reality*, vol 1: *Hegemony of Spaces*. Wayne Cristaudo & Francis Huessy, editors, Jürgen Lawrenz, translator. New York: Transaction Publishers (Taylor & Francis).

(b) Chrysalis (2016). Trajective and Prejective in the Social Philosophy of Rosenstock-Huessy. <https://longsworde.wordpress.com/2016/12/06/trajective-and-prejective-in-the-social-philosophy-of-rosenstock-huessy/>

4

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5

- Introduction
- **Cross of Reality**
  - General remarks
  - Some examples
- Affinity to Systems Theory
- Summary
- Acknowledgement
- References

6

## General remarks

- Reality or experience
- Human-centered vs world-centered
- Partitions vs differentiations
- Descriptive vs normative
- Synchronic vs diachronic

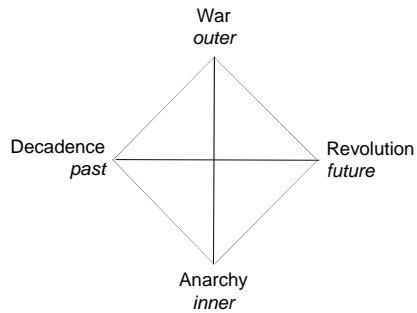
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Table 1 Summary of examples

	<b>Inner</b>	<b>Outer</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Future</b>
<i>Societal pathologies</i>	anarchy	war	decadence	revolution
<i>Speech</i>	lyrics	analytics	epics	dramatics
<i>Religion founders</i>	Lao-Tzu	Buddha	Abraham	Jesus
<i>Idols</i>	metaphysics	myth	romanticism	utopianism
<i>Degeneracies</i>	poor relations with nature	cultural demoralization	spiritual callousness	denial of death

8

Figure 2 Societal pathologies (partition)



9

## name, word, speech

- This **name**, which has ceased to be self-verifying, is retained in memory. Otherwise we would become speechless. Its life is mirrored in the self-consciousness of speakers [*inner*]... It is integrated into the empirical world [*outer*] by the reifying gaze, which apprehends it objectively and turns it into a thing among things. Living experience gropes for the name's origin [*past*]... Its future effectiveness depends on personal cooperation, on the significant affirmation [*future*]. (2017, p.7) (*differentiation*)
- A **word**, after all, makes its impact on the world by subjugating a soul for its preject [*future*], coercing it to communicate subjectively [*inner*], enforcing a trajective report [*past*] from all participants in those elaborations, and finally facilitating an objective reckoning [*outer*] that everyone can share. (2017, p.122) (*differentiation*)
- These three phases of **speech** — dramatics [*future*], lyrics [*inner*], epics [*past*] — have been known to all men always as indispensable and as normal. The fourth phase, analytics [*outer*], is indispensable too, but the men of antiquity denied that it was normal. On the other hand, our times have declared that the first three phases were dispensable, and that the fourth phase was both normal and imperative. (1970, p.58) (*partition*)

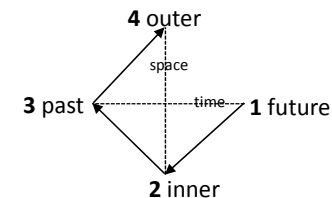
10

## religious founders, idols, degeneracies

- And the human soul owes to four founders the achievement of overcoming its shame and fear of death, through religion, as well as its confession that the call to pain and death has been made and heard. Those four founders are Buddha [*outer*], Lao-tzu [*inner*], Abraham [*past*], and Jesus [*future*]. (2017, p.176) (*partition*, ?*differentiation*)
- The four false idols are the mythmaker, enraptured and seduced by the pat terns of the world that invariably fall out of the strictures of science [*outer*, i.e., objective]; the metaphysician, seduced by the pathways and workings of thought itself [*inner*, i.e., subjective]; the romantic, overawed by the past and its charms [*past*]; and the utopian [*future*], so convinced that the future will be free of all the burdens of the past. (2017, p.xxii) (*partition*)
- With this, we have a table of the four great degeneracies of reality: Weakness in our relations with nature [*outer*]; demoralization in cultural life [*past*]; callousness in our spiritual existence [*inner*]; and dissemblance in the face of death [*future*]. (2017, p.175) (*partition*, ?*differentiation*)

11

Figure 3 Cross of reality as diachronic sequence



A **word**, after all, makes its impact on the world by subjugating a soul for its preject [1 *future*], coercing it to communicate subjectively [2 *inner*], enforcing a trajective report [3 *past*] from all participants in those elaborations, and finally facilitating an objective reckoning [4 *outer*] that everyone can share. (2017, p.122)

12

## sorrows of a transdisciplinary thinker

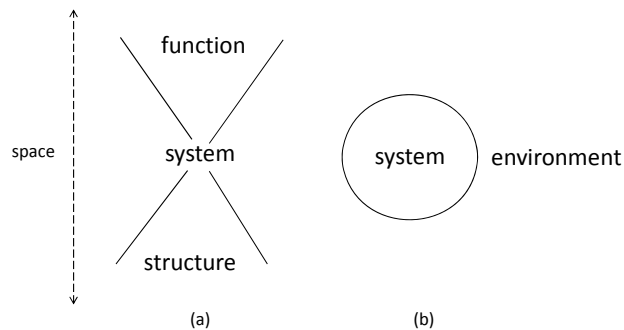
- I have survived decades of study and teaching in scholastic and academic sciences. Every one of their venerable scholars mistook me for the intellectual type which he most despised. The atheist wanted me to disappear into *Divinity*, the theologians into *sociology*, the sociologists into *history*, the historians into *journalism*, the journalists into *metaphysics*, the philosophers into *law*, and—need I say it?—the lawyers into hell, which as a member of our present world, I never had left." (1969, p. 758)

13

- Introduction
- Cross of Reality
- **Affinity to Systems Theory**
  - Space: structure-function
  - Time: past-future
  - Putting space & time together
- Summary
- Acknowledgement
- References

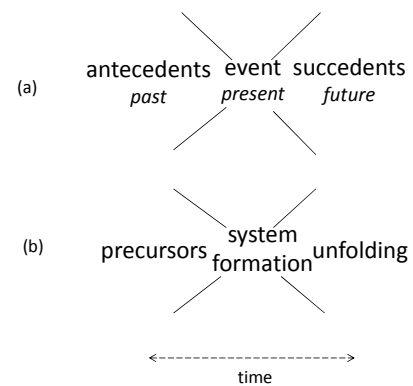
14

Figure 4 Structure-function: inward & outward



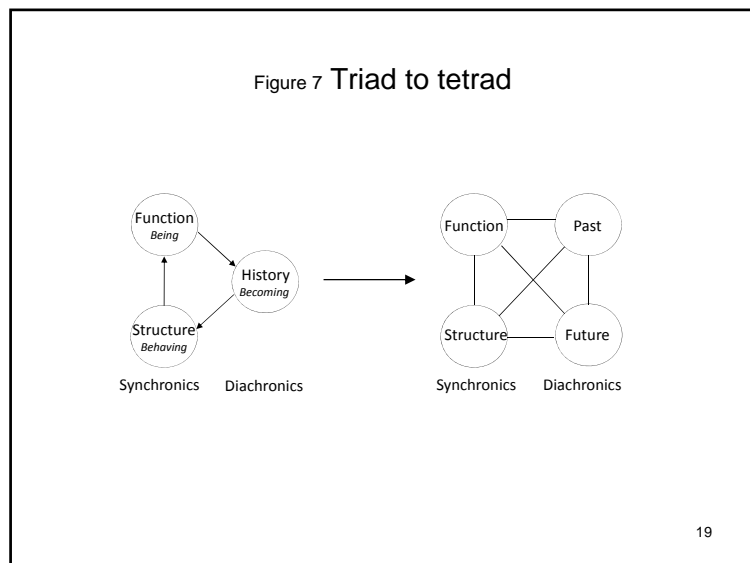
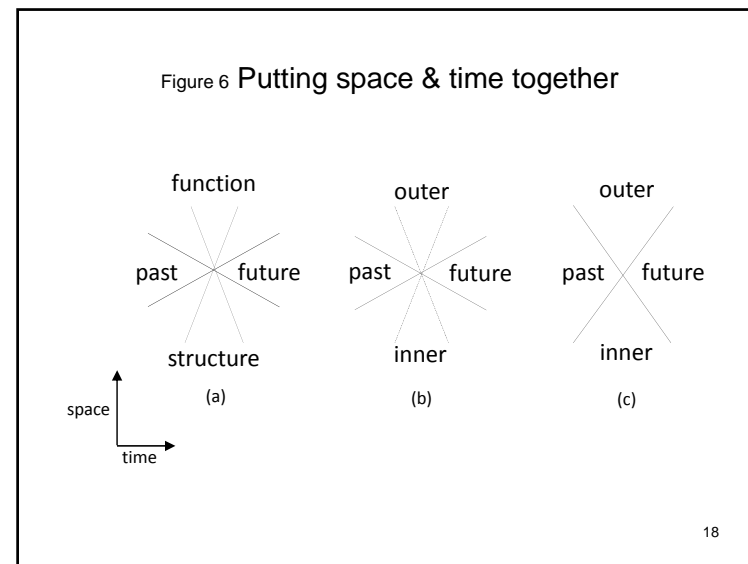
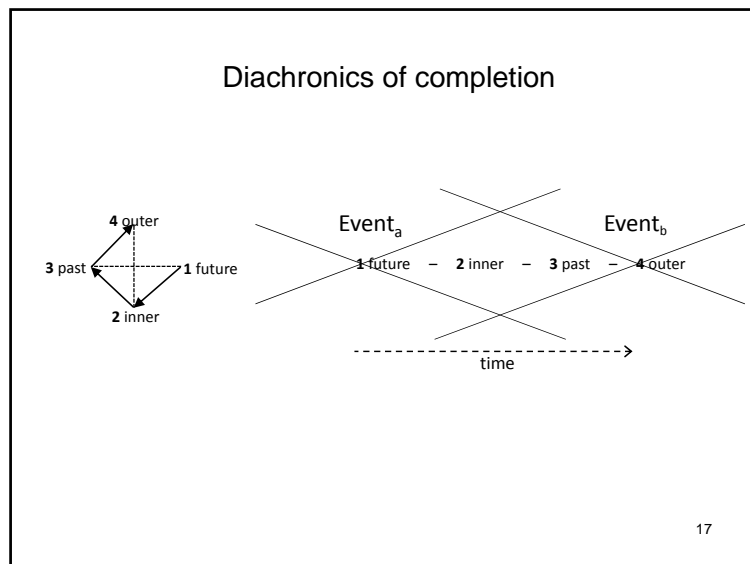
15

Figure 5 Past-future: backward & forward

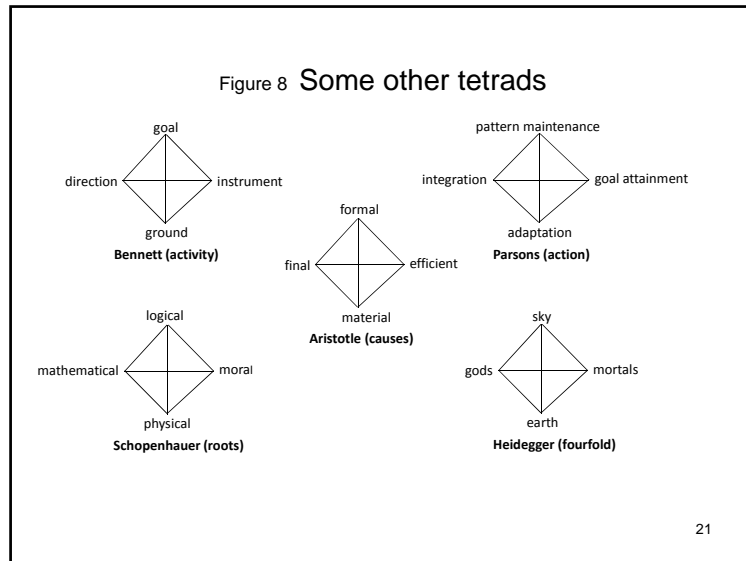


16

# Rosenstock-Huessy's Cross of Reality



- Introduction
  - The Cross of Reality
  - Affinity to Systems Theory
  - **Summary**
  - Acknowledgement
  - References
- 20



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22

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25

Thank you.

26