REPLY TO W. THOMAS DUNCANSON

Eugene D. Tate and Kathleen McConnell
St. Thomas More College

While we do not wish to respond to everything W. Thomas Duncanson has said in his reply to our earlier work, we do wish to note that he has distorted the intention of our "Comment and Reply", misrepresented the instructional strategies mentioned in our article and misrepresents the work and teaching of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy. We believe that this does require some minimal comment simply to point out where he is in error concerning Rosenstock-Huessy.

1. As one reads Duncanson it becomes clear that the key to his entire response lies in statement number five. We are under attack because we are not neo-Marxist theorists! Duncanson writes: "It is a grave error to puit shot and second guess the neo-Marxian critical thecrists of human communication: though they are not all equally advanced in their analyses or talented in articulating their ideas, they are working in a complex and systematic way which can only be understood and effectively criticized from the inside."

There is no answer which can be given to this viewpoint. It cuts off all discussion and critique. It allows for discussion within the theoretical perspective of various findings and conclusions but does not allow for any examination of the assumptions which underlie neo-Marxian Critical perspectives. Thus from Duncanson's viewpoint there can be no discussion of any of the content of the Special Issue even though there are various themes and contradictions running through the issue.

2. Duncanson begins his criticism by attacking our use of the word "despair" indicating that it is a psychological pathology. By referring to a psychological pathology Duncanson utilizes the medical model here to indicate that we are psychologically sick for our own emotions.

Gerald Philips (1977), Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967), among others, have argued quite persuasively, we believe, against the use of a medical model when studying communication. The medical model makes assumptions about persons which the communication scholar finds untenable. Rather than looking for abnormalities and pathologies in behaviour the communication scholar understands that environmental and communication forces may be at work to cause an individual to act in a
certain way. In this respect despair is not a "psychological pathology" but a normal experience of people in their real life existences. It is one thing to discredit the authors by indicating they are pathological, it is another to overlook communication theory and misrepresent personal experience.

3. The quotation from Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy used by Duncanson in point five misrepresents Rosenstock-Huessy and his understanding of Marxian scholarship. Duncanson is wrong in his attempt to make Rosenstock-Huessy into a neo-Marxist thinker.

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy appreciated the insights which Marx gave about Western culture (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1969, 73 - 84). He understood, however, that Marx had made a mistake in his interpretation of Feurbach and in his understanding of social class (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1969, 84 - 111, 458 - 462, 728 - 733, 736 - 739). He also understood that his perspective carried him beyond Marx. The Cartesian foundation of Marxian thought "caricatures people" (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1970, 6 - 7). Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy understood himself as a "post-Marxian" scholar (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1969, 730 - 739).

4. The points made about lectures by Duncanson are erroneous and are not supported by the writings of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy. Duncanson uses the article, "On Teaching Too Late, Learning Too Early," to support his perspective of the teacher as authoritarian lecturer. He completely ignores the article he quotes and especially the concluding paragraphs of that article one of which we would like to quote for our readers.

One lecture is no lecture; in human affairs, the single lecture is an abuse. Just as I am wrong in speaking here too late, I am wrong in giving one address. Our modern symposia, forums, conferences with their five-minute speeches, are caricatures of the life of the mind. As you all know, I usually decline to give just one speech. For many reasons it has become futile. Since the spirit is not the speaker's or the listener's copyright, it takes time to come to an understanding. And modern man has invented the diabolical technique of the single lecture, the mass production of short addresses, to prevent any such deeper understanding. Our scientific gatherings are the final hell of the mind. Any good that might possibly be produced tonight can only result from the whole year that we have gone through together, fighting and hurting each other and seeking each other. (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1970, 113)

As one of the pioneers in Adult Education Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy fully understood the reality and necessity of "andragogy." He also understood because of the profound cultural crises which he faced with his friends of the Patmos circle after World War I. Kurt Ballerstedt formulated the question faced by the Patmos group in these words: "How
can a human being teach credibly of history, society or language in monologues? Only a human being who has lived and experienced the *thou* and the *we* in their fullness can reveal the secret of the university' (quoted by Rosenstock-Huessy, 1959, 36). It is the centrality of this question in their works that set Rosenstock-Huessy, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Leo Weismantel, Werner Picht, Hans Ehrenberg, Ferdinand Ebner, and others apart from the academic philosophers among whom Duncanson wishes to place Rosenstock-Huessy. Duncanson also overlooks Rosenstock-Huessy's strong criticism of Scheler, Heidegger, and other philosophers included in his list. *Listen and we shall survive* and I respond although I will be changed are not mere "slogans", as Duncanson would have one believe, but statements of the reality of personal existence.

REFERENCES


