

Talk by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy  
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It is very strange, really, that we should have come straight from France--from Europe--to Tunbridge. When I came to the United States first, I always had one prayer on my mind: "I shall be now an immigrant to the United States, Dear Lord, but please allow me not to immigrate to New York." So this is very beautiful and very wonderful that we are now to celebrate and to meet here among these hills.

But there is one question in this joyful gathering before my mind: that we will have three meetings and at every one of these meetings there will be a different group. And so it isn't quite easy for me to fulfill my promise which I light-heartedly gave these men who invited me to give three different lectures; or three different addresses. And, this being so, we must be ready, perhaps, to accept some repetition. And, perhaps, I have to say three times the same thing in a different manner.

But what I have to say, of course, cannot be quite disconnected with the fact that under such a long stay in this world (and twenty-five years in the United States) I am still feeling as a beginner--as a man who must try to keep you to my own roots and my own expectations--because I have not been able to follow them up, to see their fulfillment. And so, in thinking about the theme of these three speeches, I must try to speak on the smallness of the Universe and on the bigness of our home; the big size of a little house like this and the very small size of a world of Sputniks; and on the law of technical progress which had produced this strange effect that we have Sputniks and this meeting here on the Tunbridge hills from far away--making this home seem really very universal and very large and magnificent. It must appear this way, I

think, to all of us, of you. And perhaps if we take this law of technical progress a little more seriously--it is a very simple law, I shall try to formulate it--I may convey to you my still unfulfilled program or expectations: and thereby, so to speak, explain the reason why you are good enough to listen to me tonight and tomorrow (which is, in itself, quite unwarranted in itself).

Old age has no honor by itself any more in this world. Only half a year ago, I met a Dartmouth student who grew quite passionate when I mentioned the word that one should get up before gray, hoary heads. He said he wouldn't. He saw no necessity. He thought that old age had no dignity and no honor. This, again, obviously has a profound reason. And, as you know, old age is in a bad way all over the world--and I think especially in the United States. You contradict me by the fact of this gathering. Since we, therefore, form a very exceptional group, we may perhaps have every reason to be proud of this, or to be willing to study the reason why we can say that we have overcome this temptation of breaking apart young and old without any interest in each other.

Since this is a solemn occasion far beyond by own powers, you will allow me to begin with something that surpasses our own little reign. It is the song of the three children in the fiery furnace from the Canticles, and it is found in the Apocryph from the book of Daniel. And the three men in the fiery furnace were put there by the King Nebuchadnezzar because they didn't worship the idols of the day. They, of course, expected to be burned to death there; and, in their great anxiety, they sing to the Lord:

"All ye gods of the Lord, bless the Lord. Praise and exalt him above all forever."

And now, I am reading the scale of their invocations--the series of their invocations. And perhaps you are good enough to listen to the

order in which they follow each other. Think of these three men-- Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael (as they are called)--expecting to be dead in a few hours, and invoking the Universe. Which I said just before that today it has become very small. And, as you will see, projecting their fear into the most far-reaching invocations, to the extreme ends of the Universe, they first turn and they say:

"O ye Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
O ye Heavens, bless the Lord.  
O all the Waters that are above the Heavens, bless the Lord.  
O all ye Hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord."

So we are up in the heavens, and now comes the world under the heavens:

"O ye Sun and Moon, bless the Lord.  
O ye Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.  
O every Shower and Dew, bless ye the Lord.  
O all the Winds, bless the Lord.  
O ye Fire and Heat, bless the Lord.  
O ye Chill and Cold, bless the Lord.  
O ye Dews and Rains, bless the Lord.  
O ye Ice and Frost, bless the Lord.  
O ye Hoar Frosts and Snow, bless the Lord.  
O ye Nights and Days, bless the Lord.  
O ye Light and Darkness, bless the Lord.  
O ye Lightnings and Clouds, bless the Lord.  
O let the Earth bless the Lord: let it praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
O ye Mountains and Hills, bless the Lord.  
O all ye Things that spring up in the earth, bless the Lord.  
O ye Fountains, bless the Lord.  
O ye Seas and Rivers, bless the Lord.  
O ye whales, and all that move in the waters, bless the Lord.  
O all ye Fowls of the air, bless the Lord.  
O all ye Beasts and Cattle, bless the Lord: praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
O ye Sons of Men, bless the Lord.  
O Israel, bless the Lord.  
O ye Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
O ye Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
O ye Spirits and Souls of the Just, bless the Lord.  
O ye Holy and Humble of Heart, bless the Lord."

And now, please listen well:

"O Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, bless ye the Lord.  
Praise and exalt Him above all forever."

When the King came the next morning, they all were alive. The three men had not died. The sons had kept them alive, because they had projected their fear to the utmost range of the Universe. It was a very big, a very large, a very far removed universe; and they had projected their fears so far to the heavens and the skys, that they had survived their individual fear--and only in the last minute had these three men ever thought of their own individual smallness. It's the last verse in which they dare to surrender themselves to worship the Lord after they have mobilized the whole wide world to come to the benediction and the blessing of the Lord.

So when we are afraid, we project our fears far away. You all know enough of psychoanalysis to know what a great part fear and projection play today in the thoughts of modern men. They seem to have forgotten the cure that you have to make the Universe very large. And, perhaps, people are so much afraid today because this prayer doesn't work any more. The world has become very small when you have a Sputnik going around the Universe in ninety-six minutes--that's what I think it was--it makes little sense to most people to mobilize the angels and the powers of the heavens. So that's one thing I think this beloved Canicle of the three children of the fiery furnace always conveys to me.

But I, personally, am in the opposite position from these people; I'm not in fiery furnace; I am in the midst of friends. And I propose to you--as a weapon against modern analytical fear and projection--that you see that when we are in a society of friends, in a group like this, you entitle me (you empower me) not to project, but to retroject. You allow me to speak of past beginnings long ago. Any person who is beloved by younger people or a family group or friendship is allowed to speak of very small things a long time ago to foreshadow things that