

What is the role that properly belongs to God?

The role that properly belongs to God is to make whatever else there is or ever can be both possible and significant. To make all other things possible is to determine the completely general outlines, or "grand design" (Gamwell), of anything and everything that ever actually happens. To make all other things significant is to allow each thing to partly determine itself and other things as well as God's own everlasting actuality.

What, then, is the role that properly belongs to the creatures?

The role that properly belongs to the creatures, individually and collectively, is to determine the "details" of what actually happens, including what actually happens to God. Within the completely general outlines, or "grand design," determined solely by God, the creatures have the task of determining how the more or less determinate possibility determined by God is to become still more fully determinate actuality in and through their own creaturely decisions.

I contend that these roles are inalienable and unexchangeable. This means that it is as impossible for God not to play the role that properly belongs to God and to play the role that properly belongs ^{to} creatures as it is for creatures not to play the role that properly belongs to them and to play the role that properly belongs to God. Just as it belongs to creatures to be patient of God's alone playing God's role—the name for such patience at the human level, where it can only be a matter of free and responsible self-understanding, being "faith" (*fides*), which is to say, "trust" (*fiducia*) and "loyalty" (*fidelitas*)—so it belongs to God to be patient of creatures' alone playing the role that properly belongs to them—the name for such divine patience toward human beings, and, specifically, sinful human beings, being "grace" (*favor*).

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