

The role of God as Creator-Emancipator, I have said, is to make all things really possible, in fact as well as in principle, by ever and again establishing the optimal limits of creaturely freedom. The role of God as Consummator-Redeemer, then, is to make all things really real and abidingly significant by ever and again incorporating them into God's own everlasting life. This understanding presupposes that freedom, in the sense of making fully determinate actuality what was theretofore only more or less indeterminate possibility, is a strictly transcendental concept. Thus anything concretely real, being as such self-created as well as created by others, makes itself determinate actuality and thus exercises freedom in just this sense. It is because every creature exercises such freedom in creating itself that God's role as Creator-Emancipator is not to make creatures fully actual, but only to make them really possible, in principle and also in fact.

This means that what is commonly recognized to be true of human beings (as well as any other beings having distinctively moral freedom)—namely, that they can become themselves only through themselves and that, therefore, the most that God can do is to present them with the real possibility, in fact as well as in principle, of authentic existence—is just as true, in a generalized sense, of all (concretely real) beings. Distinctively moral freedom, in other words, is a special case of the metaphysical freedom to make what is up to then only more or less indeterminately possible into something determinately actual. It is *that* special case, namely, in which self-creation is mediated by understanding, and thus is, in the first instance, self-understanding.

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