

On the Natural and the Supernatural

The natural is to the supernatural, arguably, as abstract structure is to concrete event. Just as the concrete event includes the abstract structure, so the supernatural includes the natural.

Let us say, then, that an authentic self-understanding, in the sense of an existential understanding of oneself whose presuppositions and implications, metaphysically and morally, are true and right, is concrete event relative to the existentialist structure comprising these same presuppositions and implications. As such, accordingly, it can be said to be supernatural, a matter of grace and freedom, relative to the structure that is natural.

Of course, even it itself is natural insofar as *what* it is, as a *possibility*, is as much a matter of metaphysical and moral analysis as are its necessary presuppositions and implications with respect to metaphysical belief and moral belief and action. If certain metaphysical beliefs are true, then a certain self-understanding is both possible and alone authentic; and so, too, if certain moral beliefs and actions are right, one both can and should understand oneself in one way rather than another. To this extent, there is nothing supernatural about authentic self-understanding, because, as Bultmann rightly says, it is simply the "natural" understanding of human existence. But as *actuality*, as actual understanding of one's own existence, it is not natural but supernatural, in that it is concrete event, and so more than, and inclusive of, abstract structure.

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