

The religious and philosophical significance of freedom is completely missed by "compatibilism." For the question of whether we're free, religiously and philosophically considered, is not simply whether we do what we want to do, uncoerced by fear, ungovernable passion, or irresistible bribes—in short, whether we do what we do voluntarily—but also whether we are "part creators of the world, further determiners of a partly indeterminate reality." Our dignity as individuals is in "our power to settle, here and now, what all the past, and divine power, have left unsettled." "To be an individual . . . is to act individually, to have a part in the determining of the world, to carry on the work of creation, which is a [never-begun and] never-ending task" ("In Defense of Wordsworth's View of Nature": 89).

"The old teleology" that Darwinism destroyed held, in effect, that the divine individual is the only individual that determines anything. But if God were the only determiner, God would be the only individual—period.

On the other hand, genuine creative freedom in the creatures as well as in God means a pervasive element of real chance in the world. Eminent or divine creativity doesn't settle the details of cosmic history, which result from the joint actions of countless deciders, none of whom, including God, can have intended the composite results. So there is every good reason to expect some aspects of conflict and frustration in the results. (By "details" here is properly meant, not just a certain more or less specific/general~~kind~~ of result, but the precise, unique outcome.)

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