

To what extent is Niebuhr's insistence on the distinction between "rational freedom" and "the spiritual freedom to transcend [one]self as well as to transcend nature" ("Religion and Action": 1) his way of recognizing what I speak of as the difference between the *categorical* level of life-praxis, which is arguably the level at which "rational freedom" is operative, and the *transcendental* level of self-understanding, which is arguably the level on which "spiritual freedom" operates?

However one answers this question—and I more and more incline to say, "to a very considerable extent"—it is significant that Niebuhr expressly allows for the possibility that the "higher freedom of self-transcendence may be included in what is usually designated as rational freedom," insisting only that "if it is included, it must be clearly understood that the capacity of self-transcendence is a special dimension of freedom" (1). Perhaps I am mistaken, but this seems very much like my clarification of "reason," according to which the term, like "experience," has two essential aspects or dimensions: an existential aspect or vertical dimension; and an empirical aspect or horizontal dimension. This appears all the clearer to me because I, too, should speak of our "spiritual freedom" of understanding ourselves not only as a distinct, or "special," dimension of our "rational freedom," but also, with Niebuhr, as a "*higher* freedom."

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