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Theists typically think the freedom to choose between right and wrong is a great good (hence, the *free will defense*). Yet, they also typically think that the very best being—God—and inhabitants of the very best place—heaven—lack this kind of freedom. The question arises: if freedom to choose evil is so good, then why is it absent from the best being and the best place? I discuss articulations of this question in the literature and point out drawbacks of answers that have been proposed. I then propose a new answer by showing how freedom to do evil could result in certain good situations even if it does not contribute to the intrinsic greatness of a certain being or place.

1. Introduction

Wes Morriston argues that *moral* freedom—the freedom to do evil—cannot be good if the best possible being lacks it.[1] And Yujin Nagasawa et al. argue that moral freedom cannot be good if beings in heaven lack it.[2] These arguments pose a serious challenge for theists who think that moral freedom is worth having despite the evil that may result from it (in view of the *free will defense*). Theists typically think that the very best being (God) and the very best place (heaven) are devoid of moral freedom: the best being cannot do evil, and the best place cannot contain evil. These thoughts result in a puzzle. How can moral freedom be good or valuable if it is absent from the *best* being and *best* place? And even if there is no best possible being, one might think that if there *were* such a being, it would be essentially perfect and so lack moral freedom. So, why should anyone value this kind of freedom?

I will propose a new answer. But first, I will discuss the arguments expressed by Morriston, Nagasawa, et al. to draw out instances of what I call "the Problem of Moral Freedom."

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[1]Wes Morriston, "What's So Good About Moral Freedom?," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 50:3 (2000), 344–358, and "Is God Free? A Reply to Wierenga," *Faith and Philosophy* 23:1 (2006), 93–98. Cf. Quentin Smith, *Ethical and Religious Thought in Analytic Philosophy of Language* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 148–157.

[2]Yujin Nagasawa, Graham Oppy, and Nick Trakakis, "Salvation in Heaven?," *Philosophical Papers* 33:1 (2004), 97–119.

2. Morriston's Dilemma

Morriston presents the following dilemma: either a maximally great being would have moral freedom, or else moral freedom does not contribute to one's greatness. The first horn, which implies that God can do evil, contradicts classical theism. The second calls into question the value of having the freedom to do evil: why would moral freedom be valuable if a maximally great being would lack it? This dilemma targets classical theists who think that moral freedom has some value.[3]

Morriston considers whether moral freedom might be valuable *for creatures* but not for God.[4] Perhaps if God creates Ted with an essentially morally perfect nature, then Ted cannot be properly praised for doing good. Consider that Ted's actions would be good rather than bad only because of *God*'s decision to make Ted perfect. It seems, then, that Ted is not the *ultimate source* of the fact that any of his actions are good. And perhaps one must be the ultimate source of a fact to be ultimately responsible for that fact. Thus, perhaps Ted cannot be responsible, and so properly praised, for his good actions precisely because he is not the ultimate source of them, and perhaps he is not the ultimate source of them precisely because he was *created* perfect. Morriston considers whether things might be different with uncreated beings. Since no one created God to be perfect, God can be the ultimate source of His actions—and so be properly praised for them. Thus, perhaps God, *unlike* created beings, can be morally praiseworthy without having the freedom to do evil.

Morriston does not think this suggestion provides a way out of his dilemma, however. He emphasizes that essentially morally perfect beings, whether created or not, would be determined by *their natures* to act in a certain way, and he suggests that they would therefore be *equally* praiseworthy (or not praiseworthy) for their actions. For suppose Ned is an essentially morally perfect being that pops into existence uncaused, and suppose Ted is an essentially morally perfect being that is created. Notice that both Ned and Ted lack control over what essential natures they happen to have: they are both *stuck* being essentially morally perfect. But then it may be counterintuitive to suppose that the uncreated Ned *alone* is praiseworthy for his actions. Ned and Ted, alike, lack control over their

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[3]Non-traditional theists who think, for example, that moral freedom is *essential* to being a morally responsible agent may resist the dilemma on the grounds that the *best* being would indeed have moral freedom. And, of course, theological determinists who place no stock in the *free will defense* (which emphasizes the value of moral freedom) will not be troubled by the dilemma. The intent of this paper is to see if classical theists who value moral freedom might have a way out, too.

[4]This idea is expressed by Edward Wierenga, "The Freedom of God," *Faith and Philosophy* 19:4 (2002), 425–436 and Alexander Pruss, "The Essential Divine Perfection Objection to the Free Will Defense," *Religious Studies* 44:4 (2008), 433–434. Cf. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 173–185. Morriston, "What's so Good about Moral Freedom?" 50–52, thinks the best *unsuccessful* reply to his dilemma is based upon this very idea.

natures, and thus it seems that they are *equally* responsible (or not responsible) for the predetermined consequences of their natures.

I am sympathetic with Morriston's critique. Beings that are essentially morally perfect have a nature they did not choose to have, and potentially praiseworthy actions deterministically (and non-causally) flow from that very nature. It is not clear, then, why we should praise such beings or why we should praise them *only* if they happen to be uncaused. It is still perplexing: why should moral freedom be valuable for creatures but not for God?[5]

Answers are scarce.[6] Alexander Pruss suggests an answer based upon the doctrine of divine simplicity.[7] The idea is that if God alone *is* his nature, then we may give the following explanation as to why moral freedom is valuable for creatures but not for God: creatures that are essentially perfect are not praiseworthy since their essential *natures* stand prior to them in the sequence of explanation (i.e., they do good only because they are by nature good), whereas God is praiseworthy because God and his nature stand as one and the same starting point in the sequence of explanation. Yet, one may doubt that a difference in explanatory starting points is relevant: after all, whether an individual is identical to its nature or not, it still *lacks control* over what essential nature it has (or *is*) and so would seem to lack control over what actions deterministically flow from its nature; why, then, should we praise a being that happens to *be* an essentially perfect nature but not one that happens to *have* an essentially perfect nature?[8] Moreover, many philosophers of religion find it implausible that God should be identical to his nature. So, I would like to explore whether a solution can be given that is not wedded to divine simplicity.

A different solution involves accepting the first horn and supposing that a maximally great being actually *can* do evil, though never *would*.[9] This view has a significant drawback, however: it leaves unexplained why all the actions of a morally perfect being happen to be good all the time. It seems quite unlikely, *a priori*, that a being would always do what's right if it is genuinely possible for that being to do evil at every turn. What, then, might explain why God always succeeds in making the right choice? R. Zachary Manis suggests that God's good character could provide a non-

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[5]For an elaboration and defense of this criticism, see Morriston, "What's So Good about Moral Freedom?" 350–352. See also Morriston, "Is God Free?"

[6]The most common answer given is the one just critiqued.

[7]Alexander Pruss, "A New Free Will Defense," *Religious Studies* 39:2 (2003), 211–223.

[8]Tom Flint drew my attention to this possible reply, which, as he suggested, may appeal to someone who is convinced by the Ned and Ted example that the origin of one's nature is not relevant to one's praiseworthiness.

[9]See R. Zachary Manis, "Could God Do Something Evil? A Molinist Solution to the Problem of Divine Freedom," *Faith and Philosophy* 28:2 (2011), 209–223 for a defense of this view. See also Theodore Guleserian, "Divine Freedom and the Problem of Evil," *Faith and Philosophy* 17:3 (2000), 348–366.

deterministic explanation of God's good actions.[10] But even so, the fact that God *never* performs (and *would* never perform) a wrong action seems extraordinarily unlikely if God's character does indeed permit wrong actions. It seems vastly more likely that God would always act perfectly *if* God were essentially perfect than if God were not; and this probability difference lends credence to the traditional view that a maximally great God would be essentially perfect.

Moreover, even if a non-traditional view of God's goodness is sustainable, the task of this paper is to see if a solution to the Problem of Moral Freedom could be found that does not *require* abandoning the traditional view (even if just for the sake of argument). So far, I have not found a satisfying solution in the literature.[11]

3. The Problem of Heaven

We may state the Problem of Moral Freedom with respect to heaven as follows:

1) Heaven is essentially devoid of evil.

2) If heaven is essentially devoid of evil, then no one has moral freedom in heaven.

3) Therefore, no one has moral freedom in heaven. (1, 2)

4) Heaven is the *best* place (realizes the greatest goods).

5) If heaven is the best place and no one has moral freedom there, then having moral freedom is not valuable (at any time).

6) Therefore, having moral freedom is not valuable (at any time).[12] (3–5)

Premises (1) and (4) fall out of a traditional understanding of heaven that many theists accept.[13] Premise (1) says that, necessarily, heaven contains

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[10]Manis, "Could God Do Something Evil?" 220.

[11]Peter van Inwagen, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 166, has proposed in a footnote a solution which one may find partially satisfying. He suggests that beings that are finite in knowledge cannot be essentially morally perfect, since they won't always know which action is morally right. I say this proposal is at best only partially satisfying since it doesn't provide an account for why human beings should have moral freedom to perform actions that they *know* to be bad. It can only account for why human beings are able to commit sins of ignorance. A free-will defense, for example, that accounts only for sins done out of ignorance is rather shabby: it clearly doesn't do the work that theists have traditionally wanted it to do. Moreover, we may wonder what's so valuable about having a merely finite amount of knowledge (or of being human, if finite knowledge is essential to human nature), especially considering that a maximally great being would have infinite knowledge. The supposition that moral freedom implies finite knowledge doesn't *by itself* explain why moral freedom is valuable.

[12]Cf. Nagasawa, et al., "Salvation in Heaven?" 103–104.

[13]It is also a common view that a third of the angels were kicked out of heaven (cf. Revelation 12:3–9), and one might wonder if that view implies that angels can do evil in heaven (before getting kicked out). Nevertheless, I am restricting our focus to evil done by *humans*,

no evil. Premise (4) adds that heaven realizes the best kinds of goods: for example, it contains perfect love among creatures and their Creator. (Some philosophers may prefer an alternative view of heaven, but I will assume the view of heaven expressed by (1) if only because it is the view on which the Problem of Moral Freedom is most challenging.[14])

Premise (2) is justified by the definition of "moral freedom." Suppose I have moral freedom in a circumstance C. Then it is *possible* for me to be in C and do evil.[15] Therefore, if I have moral freedom in a heavenly circumstance, then it is possible for me to be in a heavenly circumstance—i.e., in heaven—and do evil.[16] So, if I cannot do evil in heaven, then I do not have moral freedom there.

That leaves premise (5): if heaven is the best place and no one has moral freedom there, then having moral freedom is not valuable (at any time). This premise may sound reasonable if we assume that the very *highest* goods and the very *best* relationships (in heaven) are devoid of moral freedom. It is hard to see what good moral freedom might contribute if it doesn't contribute to the best relationships in the best place.

I believe a successful reply will involve motivating the following claim:

1)   At least some of the goods in heaven depend for their existence on there being persons who *had* moral freedom.

Suppose some goods in heaven depend upon persons having *had* moral freedom. Then (5)—which says that if heaven is the best place and no one has [present tense] moral freedom there, then having moral freedom is not valuable (*at any time*)—is certainly false, and so the argument fails. For,

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since my understanding is that the traditional view is that humans will not be able to do evil in heaven. At least, this is a view that many theists appear to accept.

    [14]Just so it is clear, my goal is not to defend the claim that heaven is the best place. My goal, rather, is to explain why there is no serious view of heaven that entails that moral freedom has no value.

    [15]Morriston assumes that freedom to do X implies the possibility of doing X, since this assumption undergirds the free will defense. I join Morriston in working with this assumption if only because it is what generates the problem. But see Steven Cowan, "Compatibilism and the Sinlessness of the Redeemed in Heaven," *Faith and Philosophy* 28:4 (2011), 416–432, for a discussion of why one might abandon this assumption in order to avoid the problem.

    [16]I am assuming that no one *could* do evil in heaven, not merely that no one *would*. If we suppose instead that people could do evil in heaven but nonetheless never would, then we exacerbate the problem posed by heaven: for if God can actualize a place in which everyone would consistently chose rightly, then one wonders why God couldn't or didn't actualize such a place *from the start*. Cf. Nagasawa, et al., "Salvation in Heaven?" 106–108. Of course, it may be logically possible that God creates someone who would choose wrongly prior to entering heaven and who would then consistently choose rightly forever and ever. The difficulty, however, is in seeing why God could not also find any number of possible humans who would consistently do right forever from the start. It may be *possible* that the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom prohibit this, but the question is whether this is at all *probable*. Cf. Josh Rasmussen, "On Creating Worlds without Evil—Given Divine Counterfactual Knowledge," *Religious Studies* 40:4 (2004), 457–470. Perhaps this difficulty can ultimately be overcome, but I prefer to see if there might be a solution to the Problem of Moral Freedom that is not wedded to a particular, controversial view of the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom.

according to (7), the value of moral freedom (at some time) consists in the heavenly goods it reaps *later on*.

Is there a way to motivate (7)? The most promising motivation I have encountered comes from James Sennett.[17] Sennett suggests that among the goods in heaven are *free* actions, and that these actions count as "free" by virtue of being determined by a moral character that was itself freely chosen. To illustrate, imagine that a creature, Jerry, can choose between right and wrong; he has moral freedom. He sometimes chooses wrong, but he repents and struggles to develop a good moral character. Perhaps he even requests God's help in this process. Eventually Jerry achieves a moral character (either in this life or the next) that prevents him from performing evil actions in heavenly circumstances. According to Sennett, Jerry's actions still count as "free" in heaven because they flow from a *freely chosen* character. Perhaps, then, creatures in heaven who *had* moral freedom can enjoy the benefit of performing "free" actions even while they no longer have the capacity to do evil. The value of moral freedom would then be this: it enables an eternity of "free" actions that are all good.

Unfortunately, there are a couple of reasons to doubt that Sennett's suggestion constitutes an adequate solution to the Problem of Moral Freedom. First, it falls prey to Morriston's dilemma. Recall the dilemma: either a maximally great being has moral freedom, which is incompatible with classical theism, or moral freedom is not a great-making property. Sennett's suggestion effectively blocks any way of going between the horns, for it implies that actions that flow from a *freely chosen* nature are superior to actions that flow from a nature that is not freely chosen. But now it looks as though our actions have a great-making feature that God's actions must lack, since God's nature was not freely chosen. The challenge, then, is to explain why the actions of a maximally *great* being should lack this particular great-making feature of creaturely actions. That challenge remains to be met.[18]

Nagasawa, et al., raise further objections to Sennett's proposal.[19] Here is just one (in my own terms). Suppose that Jerry freely chooses a morally good character and *then* God makes an intrinsic duplicate of Jerry.

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[17]James Sennett, "Is there Freedom in Heaven?," *Faith and Philosophy* 16:1 (1999), 69–82. Tim Pawl and Kevin Timpe, "Incompatibilism, Sin, and Free Will in Heaven," *Faith and Philosophy* 26:4 (2009), 398–419, build upon Sennett's proposal but emphasize the value of freedom in heaven to choose *among* goods.

[18]This same objection poses a problem for the solution given by Pawl and Timpe in "Incompatibilism, Sin, and Free Will in Heaven," since they, like Sennett, think there is a kind of genuine freedom that citizens of heaven enjoy that *excludes* the ability to sin. They even say (more recently), "we see no reason why one should value freedom-plus-ability-to-sin over freedom-minus-ability-to-sin." See Pawl and Timpe, "Heavenly Freedom: A Reply to Cowan," *Faith and Philosophy* (forthcoming). But if freedom-minus-ability-to-sin is *just as* valuable as freedom-plus-ability-to-sin, then we are back to wondering why freedom-plus-ability-to-sin should *ever* be preferred. We have not escaped Morriston's dilemma (which, incidentally, Pawl and Timpe do not address). Cf. Cowan, "Compatibilism and the Sinlessness of the Redeemed," 428–429.

[19]Nagasawa, Oppy, and Trakakis, "Salvation in Heaven?" 110–113.

Both Jerry and his duplicate may now enjoy perfect love and fellowship with God and others forever, for they are *intrinsically exactly alike*. Oddly, Sennett's proposal entails that Jerry, but not his duplicate, performs free actions (or at least actions that are as valuable as free actions) in heaven. Nagasawa, et al., suggest that this result is highly implausible; it's implausible, they say, that Jerry's actions would be free and valuable while the intrinsically similar loving actions of his duplicate would not be. For this reason, they reject Sennett's proposal.

I don't claim that the problems just discussed are decisive, or that no one will think of replies to them.[20] My point is just that Sennett's solution leads to questions that have yet to be addressed at this stage in the dialectic. The Problem of Moral Freedom remains unsolved.

At this point, someone might reply in the spirit of *skeptical theism* that we simply are not in a position to know what value moral freedom contributes for creatures. This reply suggests that we can simply live with a puzzle; that is, we can rationally affirm the value of moral freedom without having any idea *how* moral freedom could be valuable while absent from the best place and the best being.

However, this paper is not concerned with questions about what's *rational* to believe. The goal of this essay is to make headway in actually solving the Problem of Moral Freedom. And that's what I propose to do next.

4. A Value of Moral Freedom

The question on the table is this: why is moral freedom valuable if the best place and the best being lack it? So far, we have considered the alleged value of moral freedom for creatures. A creature is supposedly *better off* if that creature has moral freedom. But perhaps moral freedom is good not primarily because it contributes to the value or quality of a being, but rather because it contributes to the value or quality of certain *situations* that involve free actions. To explain what I mean, consider the following two stories:

> (Forced-Love) Sally loves daffodils, and her husband, Sam, knows this. Rather than wait to see if Sam will decide to buy her daffodils, Sally discreetly pours a love potion into Sam's soup. After Sam eats his soup, the potion deterministically causes him to form a desire sufficiently strong so as to causally determine that Sam expresses love to Sally by surprising her with a vase full of daffodils. As a result, Sam does exactly that.

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[20]Jerry Walls suggested to me (via e-mail, July 1st, 2012) the following reply to this last problem. Observe that unlike Jerry's duplicate, Jerry would have (veridical) memories of how his character was formed by his previous choices; furthermore, Jerry's firm resolve to resist sin and choose the good in heaven would no doubt be motivated by memories of the misery of choosing sin and the hurtful consequences. Hence, moral freedom could bring the following good: a motivation to act rightly based upon truthful memories of how one's character was freely developed.

> (Unforced-Love) Sally loves daffodils, and her husband, Sam, knows this. One day, Sam decides, of his own accord, to express love to Sally by surprising her with a vase full of daffodils.

Now ask yourself, which situation is *better*? Surely it is (Unforced-Love). In it, Sam expresses love toward Sally of his own accord; Sally does not cause him to do so. By contrast, in (Forced-Love), Sally causally determines Sam's act of love toward her. The fact that Sally herself is the one who kicks off the sequence of events that causally determines Sam's act of love seems to detract from the goodness of the situation.

It seems that (Unforced-Love) would still be better than (Forced-Love), even if Sam would have inevitably given Sally daffodils of his own accord. Note that what makes (Unforced-Love) better may not merely be that it features an action that is free (in the libertarian sense). I suggest that a value arises from the fact that someone gets to be loved without that *very person* having to resort to determining the very loving act directed toward him.[21] True, Sally's existence and attributes may play a role in Sam's decision; what's important, however, is that the role they play is not *causally determining*. I suggest, therefore, that one important reason (Unforced-Love) seems better than (Forced-Love) is this: only in (Unforced-Love) does someone benefit from an act of love without causally determining that very act. (There may be additional reasons, too.) Therefore, I propose that

> (L) A situation in which an agent *x makes* some agent *y* express love toward *x* lacks a certain value that's included in a situation in which *x* is the recipient of an expression of love by *y* without *x* making *y* express love to *x*,

where I stipulate that

> > "*x* makes *y* do *z*" $=_{\text{def}}$ "*x* performs an action *A* that is part of a causal chain resulting in a state of the world[22] that (i) necessarily implies that *y* does *z* at some time, and (ii) obtains independently of any prior intention of *y* to do *z*."[23]

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[21]Thus, we do not commit ourselves to the controversial thesis that a freely chosen expression of love is automatically more valuable than an inevitable or psychologically determined expression of love. For a critical discussion of this controversial thesis, see Kenneth Eimar Himma, "The Free-Will Defence: Evil and the Moral Value of Free Will," *Religious Studies* 45:4 (2009), 400–403.

[22]A "state of the world" is a proposition that describes what is the case at some time without also specifying what *will* be the case or what *was* the case from the perspective of that time. A state of the world also doesn't include any counterfactuals of freedom or divine foreknowledge.

[23]This second clause is added to rule out a scenario like the following. Sam decides of his own accord to get Sally daffodils. But he cannot get them without the car keys in Sally's purse. So, Sam asks Sally for the keys (without telling her his plan), and Sally hands him the keys. As it happens, Sally's handing the keys to Sam results in a state of the world—one that includes Sam's *previously formed* intention to get daffodils for Sally—that entails that Sam gets daffodils for Sally. (Imagine that Sam's decision is firm and beyond the point of no return, and that everything else relevant to the scenario now proceeds deterministi-

Before I continue, notice that (L) focuses on just one value. There might well be counterbalancing values. For example, a theological determinist could think that *divine providence*—of the sort that requires causal determinism—is of such great value that our world is better off *in total* if everyone's acts of love toward God are causally determined by God. Or, one could argue that the value in (L) is too miniscule to be worth allowing evil choices (be they few or many) for the sake of it.[24] My goal is to explain how moral freedom could contribute *some* value to our world despite not contributing to the value of the best place or the best being.

Let us continue. I will now explain why if (L) is true, then moral freedom can contribute value to our world. If (L) is true, then a situation in which God makes people express love toward Him (through causal determination) would lack a certain value that is had by a situation in which people express love toward God of their own accord (that is, without God making them do so). We might expect that God would want to receive love from his creatures without being the determining cause of that love. Thus, to permit the desired love from His creatures, God must not *make* His creatures love Him, which in turn implies that God cannot simply make his creatures essentially morally perfect; they must be morally free if God and his creatures are to enjoy unforced love. Therefore, moral freedom has this value: it allows there to be a situation in which a being, such as God, is the object of loving acts without causally determining those very acts. (Notice that there is no analogous reason to think that *God*'s having moral freedom would be good: even without having moral freedom, God loves his creatures without those creatures making Him do so.[25])

This solution to Morriston's dilemma differs from the solution we considered earlier. There it was suggested that moral freedom allows creatures to be morally praiseworthy for their actions. The problem, recall, is that there does not appear to be a principled reason to think that moral praise requires moral freedom for *creatures* but not for uncreated beings, like God. The solution I offer does not face that problem since I do not say that moral freedom is required for moral praise. Nor do I even say that moral freedom contributes to the value or quality of a being that has it; perhaps creatures would actually be better (or greater) if they were essentially morally perfect. What I say instead is that moral freedom in

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cally). This case is certainly more like (Unforced-Love) than (Forced-Love) because in this case, as in (Unforced-Love), Sally does not "make" Sam do anything he was not already intent on doing. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for raising an objection that led me to recognize the value of adding this second clause.

[24]For a recent discussion of whether moral freedom has sufficient value for a theodicy, see Himma, "Plantinga's Version of the Free-Will Argument: The Good and Evil that Free Beings Do," *Religious Studies* 46:1 (2010), 21–39.

[25]If it *were* good for God to be morally free, it would not be good in the sense of contributing to God's greatness, on the assumption that maximal greatness entails essential moral goodness. If, on the other hand, moral freedom is said to be compatible with maximal greatness (contra classical theism), then Morriston's dilemma loses its force because moral freedom is then admitted to be a great-making feature.

creatures may be required for the obtaining of certain good *situations*—namely, situations in which people love God without God making them do so.[26] (I should stress that it is consistent with my account to say that creatures are "greater" in the sense that they can enter into a better kind of relationship with their creator.)

So moral freedom does not contribute to the greatness of the best being because it does not contribute to the greatness of *any* being. It does, however, enable some valuable kinds of loving situations, and that's what could be valuable about it.

It is worth pointing out that my solution leaves open the question of what makes a situation valuable. You might think, for instance, that the value of a loving situation derives in part from the value of the *actions* within that situation. In that case, what makes (Unforced-Love) better is that it features a better kind of action—one that is directed toward a person who doesn't causally determine that very action. Note that nothing in this account implies that *only* creatures are capable of performing such actions; even God, who, let's say, *must* love all persons, would not be causally determined by anyone to do so. My solution, then, allows for the possibility that moral freedom contributes to the value of certain actions.

What about the best place? Why isn't it populated with people who have moral freedom? We now have the materials for an answer. To start, recall that moral freedom enables situations in which people love God without God making them do so. Moral freedom can also lead to situations in which people freely overcome various evils or in which God extends forgiveness and redemption. (Again, that is not to say that some or all the resulting evils are worth it—only that there is value here.) So moral freedom has value—at least *for a while*. But situations involving moral freedom might eventually give way to a better situation: a situation in which people continually enjoy perfect, unforced love and fellowship with each other and with their Creator.

Why wouldn't God set up an essentially evil-free place from the beginning? Perhaps it is because doing so has this cost: it entails that God *makes* people love Him. Perhaps it is better for God to give people the freedom to choose to love Him—by enabling them to develop moral characters from which an everlasting love may eventually spring forth. Then people could continually love God forever without ever being made by God to do so. In that case, moral freedom would have value even though the best place would lack it.

I should emphasize that the above proposal is compatible with a variety of views about the after-life. For instance, one could think that many people (if not all) undergo an extended stage of post-mortem transformation involving free choices *before* entering heaven (but *after* death). On this

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[26]The ideas behind this solution are similar to ideas expressed by John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 274–275, though his ideas are given in relation to a different problem from the one Morriston raises.

view, humans achieve a morally perfect ("sinless") character (by freely cooperating with God's grace, perhaps) in a "purgatory" state prior to heaven.[27] Or a Molinist could think that creatures are morally free and consistently choose rightly during an early stage of heaven.[28] The idea here is that with some divine counterfactual planning, heaven could be arranged so that people finish the work of achieving a morally perfect character *in heaven* without ever doing evil there.[29] Or, one might think that God perfects our characters at some time (either before or after physical death) *in response* to our freely asking him to help us become morally upright. In that case, our particular acts of love toward God would meet the conditions of (Unforced-Love), since God makes us upright only because of our initial choice to pursue moral uprightness of our own accord. Other views may work, too.

My proposal is certainly related to Sennett's proposal. For like Sennett's, mine implies that heaven is better if the people there *had* moral freedom. Unlike Sennett's proposal, however, mine does not imply that morally significant actions in heaven have a great-making feature that God's actions lack. I say rather that certain valuable *situations* depend upon moral freedom. Also, I do not require that beings in heaven perform *free* actions (or that they don't). As a result, my answer is not susceptible to the same criticisms as Sennett's.

I offer the above solution to the Problem of Moral Freedom as a working hypothesis. I do not claim to have the last word; my solution may open up further inquiries. What's important is that the solution advances our understanding of moral freedom, for it provides a new explanation as to how freedom to act badly could be valuable despite its absence from the best possible being and the best place.[30]

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