

Liberty as Non-Domination Assignment

Please read following passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow:

Imagine that you are a slave, and you have a kind master. This master allows you to do whatever you want. So you choose to live in a different town from him. You choose where you want to live and the job you want, and keep all your earnings. You marry and have children, since you always wanted a family. You make friends, join local clubs and groups, and become someone in the community that others feel they can rely on. In no way does your master interfere with you or your choices.

1. In this scenario, are you free? Why or why not?
2. What would the idea of liberty as non-interference imply about your freedom in this situation?

One day, your master calls you back to serve him. He has changed his mind about letting you do whatever you want and would like you to come back to his house. But he says you can't bring your spouse or children since there is no room for them. You reply that you can't just leave your job, your family and friends, your community. You say it is unfair. But he says you are his property and must do as he wills.

3. How does this addition change the story from the first part of the scenario with respect to whether you are free, if at all? Were you free in the first part, but not now?
4. What defect does this scenario suggest in the idea of liberty as non-interference?
5. Try to describe the source of unfreedom in this scenario in your own words. (If your response is 'slavery,' consider more deeply what it is *precisely* about slavery that makes one unfree, especially when a master does not actively interfere with a slave.)
6. Google the word "arbitrary." What is its definition? How might this term help make sense of this case?