

## Quantitative and Qualitative Aspects of Experienced Freedom

Malcolm R. Westcott

*York University*

Distinctions are made between concepts of freedom as prescribed in the philosophical, political, and legal literature, freedom as attributed to the behavior of others or the self, and the experience of feeling free. Two samples of university students were asked to indicate the extent to which they "feel free" in 28 situations of seven different types: (1) Self Direction; (2) Absence of Responsibility; (3) Release from Noxious Stimulation; (4) Recognition of Limits; (5) Active Decision Making; (6) Presence of Alternatives; (7) Exercise of Skilled Behavior. Subjects were also asked to indicate if they felt any opposite to "free" in the same situations, and if so, to supply the specific opposite appropriate to themselves and the situation. The results showed that the different types of situations evoked large and significantly different degrees of reported experiences of freedom, with Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior being the most powerful, and Active Decision Making and Recognition of Limits being the least powerful. The 224 different opposites supplied were reliably coded into eight categories and were the basis for a dialectical analysis of the dimensions along which the experience of freedom is construed in the different types of situations. Differential use of the codes illuminated subtle variations in the quality of feeling free in the respective situations. No sex differences were found, and all results were strongly replicated on the two samples. Comparisons and contrasts with assertions and findings about human freedom arising in other literatures are explored.

For most of the hundred years psychology has claimed identity as a discipline independent of physiology and philosophy, the notion of human freedom has been avoided. The issue of freedom has been intimately linked with the free will/determinism controversy which has generally been problematic for those psychologists trying to build a scientific psychology on the model of the physical and biological sciences. While many of the most distinguished early psychologists, such as Wundt and James, were very concerned with matters of will and volition, as ubiquitous features of human

---

The research reported here has been supported, in part, by the York University Faculty of Arts Minor Research Grants Programme and by the SSHRC Small Grants Programme. Portions of this paper were presented at meetings of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology in Orlando, Florida, March 23-25, 1978, and in Norfolk, Virginia, April 12-14, 1979, at the Annual Meeting of The Canadian Psychological Association in Calgary, Alberta, June 18-20, 1980, and at The International Conference on General Semantics, Toronto, August 11-14, 1980. A preliminary report of this research was published in *Etcetra: a review of general semantics* (Westcott, 1981). The author wishes to thank Trudy Beaulne, E. Mark Clare, and Joel Oxman for their assistance in data collection and analysis, and Raymond Fancher, Richard Goranson, David Rennie, and Page Westcott for critical reading and valuable suggestions on earlier drafts of the manuscript. Requests for reprints should be sent to Malcolm R. Westcott, Department of Psychology, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3.

experience (Danziger, 1980), the rise and eventual dominance of positivistic and behavioristic viewpoints in psychology set these concerns aside. Only a few writers, somewhat peripheral to mainstream behavioral psychology (e.g., Fromm, 1941; May, 1969), addressed matters such as will, freedom, and responsibility as legitimate psychological problems. Other psychologists (e.g., Boring, 1957), dealt with them as essentially philosophical problems.

It was barely a decade ago, that human freedom became a respectable subject for study by social psychologists. Steiner (1970) provided the first extensive and systematic treatment of the subject and it is worth noting that of his more than 150 references, only three had the word "freedom" in their original titles. The legitimacy of the psychological study of human freedom was established by casting it in the framework of attribution theory and exploring the conditions under which observers attribute freedom to the behavior of actors. This approach addressed a legitimate psychological question unencumbered by the vexing issue as to whether behavior is ever (or always) free in any absolute sense. Steiner (1970) spoke of "perceived freedom," and indicated that at that time work on the attribution of freedom to the behavior of others was very fragmentary, and that work on the attribution of freedom to one's own behavior was even more limited.

However, studies in this area grew rapidly, so that only a few years later, Harvey (1976) was able to report and review ". . . a fairly substantial amount of evidence . . ." (p. 93) concerning the conditions under which observers attribute freedom to others; there was, in addition, growing evidence concerning the self-attribution of freedom. Studies in the area of attribution theory have become the principal focus of psychological research on human freedom — it is crucial to recognize that the central concern of these studies remains the attribution process, *not* the psychological characteristics of experienced human freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Predating the psychological study of human freedom by many hundreds of years, there exists an illustrious and labyrinthine history of the exploration of human freedom within the disciplines of philosophy, politics, and law. These theoretical works are primarily concerned with prescriptions for human freedom. That is, they describe and explore conditions under which persons are (or are not) free, by definition, within a particular theoretical context — quite apart from whether persons appear to be free or experience themselves

---

<sup>1</sup>Two other areas of study also have been concerned with human freedom. The reactance paradigm (Brehm, 1962; Wicklund, 1974) is concerned with the motivational state which arises when previously available alternatives (freedom) are withdrawn; reactance is the organization of behavior so as to reinstate the availability of these alternatives. In addition, studies of cognitive dissonance occasionally have investigated "how free" Ss felt they were to refuse to engage in counter attitudinal behavior under various degrees of inducement or coercion (Brehm, & Cohen, 1962).

as free. Different theorists argue different points of view: For example, one position holds that freedom lies only in non-interference, and any stipulation beyond that becomes prescriptive, and consequently an interference with freedom; a second position holds that freedom requires the presence of opportunities and the resources to exploit the opportunities —without these, the concept of non-interference is meaningless; a third claims that freedom is a meaningful concept only if an agent can be said to be free *from* something in order *to do* something; another argues that freedom is demonstrated only in the accomplishment of acts — the “having done” is the necessary criterion which demonstrates retrospectively the freedom to carry out in act, despite prohibitions, costs, or subsequent penalties (cf., Berlin, 1958, 1969; Dewey & Gould, 1970; Gibbs, 1976; Parent, 1974; Westcott, 1978).

Contrasting with the prescription of conditions for freedom and with attributions of freedom is a third realm of interest: the systematic study of conditions under which humans experience themselves as free. This area has hardly been touched, and is the focus of the present paper. In this paper we will maintain a conceptual distinction between a self attribution of freedom (“I am free”) and a report of experienced freedom (“I feel free”). It seems worthwhile to risk belaboring this distinction in order to forestall confusion which may arise later.

According to one of the viewpoints mentioned above I may “be free” to drive my car at 100 km/h through downtown Toronto, if the traffic is not too heavy and my car is capable of that speed. I may be arrested for doing so, but I “am free” to do it by virtue of having the capacity and the opportunity. But I may not “feel free” to do so, inasmuch as the risks are too great. The same can be said for my ontological state of “being free” and my experiential state of “feeling free” to leave a dull party at my chairperson’s home. Being free is an ontological condition and feeling free is a psychological condition.

An individual may be said to “be free” when released from prison after a long term. But the traditional suit of clothes, ten dollars, and a cardboard suitcase may not provide sufficient resources so that one can “feel free” in the outside world. The ontological state of “being free” can be prescribed by political and social theory, or provided by social conditions, or attributed more casually by an observer or by the self, but the prescription or attribution of this state is conceptually quite different from the experiential state of “feeling free.”

Something of a paradox is the freedom experienced when all hope or aspiration is gone. For example, the “. . . we don’t care anymore . . .” of the Soviet dissidents (cf., Gold, 1974) or the popular song, “Me and Bobby McGee,” in which “. . . freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose. . . .” “Feeling free” is clearly an experience quite distinguishable from

the ontological state of being free, according to definition. To be sure, they may coincide, but they need not.

A distinction of this kind has been maintained for more than a decade by deCharms (1968, 1976, 1979) between *felt or experienced control* and *perceived or attributed control*. The former arises when one is driving a sports car brilliantly, while the latter arises when one observes an orator manipulate an audience. deCharms expresses dissatisfaction with the limitations of the "perceptual model" in dealing with such complex phenomena as the control of human behavior. The present author, of course, shares this dissatisfaction with respect to the psychological study of human freedom, which has been also examined, almost exclusively, within the same perceptual model.

It can be further argued that the ontological state of "being free" is rendered logically pure, by careful definitional effort (cf., Berlin, 1958, 1969; Parent, 1972), while the experience of "feeling free" is necessarily logically impure, comprising idiosyncratic mixes of cognitive and emotional components. However, logical impurity is the stuff of human experience. Love-hate, wish-fear ambivalences which defy Aristotelian logic are central to our lives, and it is possible that humans are more concerned with "feeling free" as an experience than they are with "being free" according to one or another external authority, however sophisticatedly analytical or benign. Perhaps the ultimate pragmatic question is whether systematic, replicable, and meaningful data can be generated through inquiry into a logically impure, but psychologically meaningful domain.

There are, then, three distinct realms of interest: (1) the philosophical, political, and legal literature concerning the conditions under which persons *are* free by definition; (2) the attribution studies concerning the conditions under which persons *appear* to be free to others, or to themselves; and (3) the essentially unexplored realm of inquiry into the conditions under which people *experience* themselves as free. Within each realm, investigators ask different questions, employ different methodologies, and reach quite different conclusions, all of which have relevance to the study of human freedom.

In an earlier paper, Westcott (1978) explored several distinctions in the realm of human freedom within the philosophical literature, but which have not been reflected in psychological studies. Many worthwhile distinctions are simply blurred; for example, "feeling free" or "being free" are often interchanged and reduced to unidimensional characteristics attributed to others or to the self. It appears that the methodological commitments which brought psychological legitimacy to this area of inquiry have dictated what kinds of questions could be asked. These constraints have narrowed the inquiry unnecessarily, and have kept social psychologists from addressing the issues of human freedom directly in ways which respond to their richness and

diversity.

This criticism is in line with the growing dissatisfaction among psychologists with respect to the experimental social psychological methodologies dominant over the past several decades (cf., Harré, 1979; Harré & Secord, 1972; Giorgi, 1970; Koch, 1981; Petrinovich, 1979; Silverman, 1977; Smith, 1972; Valle & King, 1978). Within the realm of human freedom there are various subtleties and distinctions, as found in the work of analytic philosophers, political writers and novelists, as well as both the casual and formal theories and descriptions found in the psychotherapy and behavior change literatures (cf., Enns, Note 1, Note 2). If systematic psychological research is to be representative of the reality it is meant to describe, these subtleties, distinctions, and complexities cannot be ignored (cf., Petrinovich, 1979).

Some researchers in the experimental tradition (e.g., Gurwitz & Panciera, 1975) have been sensitive to the constraints that a particular format of inquiry imposes on the kinds of generalizations which can be made in an area as complex as human freedom. They are very careful to describe these limitations and they specify exactly what questions are asked of respondents. In contrast, others (e.g., Harvey, Harris, & Barnes, 1975) provide only the general intent of the questions asked to subjects, while Harvey (1976) chooses to telescope the notions of perceived choice, volition, and free will, as "... referring in a rather general fashion to the same phenomenal state" (1976, p. 74). More recently, Steiner (1979), in writing about choice and perceived control, has differentiated several kinds of choice, for example, choices between nearly equal alternatives and between very different alternatives. The different alternatives Steiner describes are very similar to those described by Westcott (1977) in a study of experienced will. Quite apart from metaphysical questions about the reality of freedom and free will, which are the proper (and very active) business of philosophers (Westcott, 1977, 1978), will and freedom are ubiquitous human *experiences*, and psychologists can, and should, study them as such.

The present paper comprises two such studies. Study 1 examines the extent to which respondents report that they "feel free" under a variety of conditions; Study 2 explores some of the qualitative features of the freedom experienced under these conditions. The purpose of these studies is descriptive, and no substantive hypotheses are tested, inasmuch as there is insufficient psychological theory concerning the experience(s) of freedom to yield hypotheses.<sup>2</sup> The conditions studied are derived from earlier writings on this subject and from initial direct interviews with respondents (Westcott, 1978).

---

<sup>2</sup>Some methodological hypotheses, such as replicability, are tested.

## Study 1: Quantitative Features of Experienced Freedom

### *Method*

Seven different types of situations, asserted to contribute to either prescribed, attributed, or experienced human freedom were derived from the philosophical and psychological literatures, as well as from selected interviews. The seven types of situations were: (1) Self Direction; (2) Absence of Responsibility; (3) Release from Noxious Stimulation; (4) Recognition of Limits; (5) Active Decision Making; (6) Presence of Alternatives; (7) Exercise of Skilled Behavior. Four specific examples of each kind of situation were progressively developed and refined by an iterative process of requesting university students to sort the specific situations into their presumed parent categories. Following each sorting, the situational descriptions were revised in the light of sorting "errors" and a new sample of sorters attempted the task again. Four cycles of this kind ultimately yielded 90% accuracy of sorting by a sample of 30 university undergraduates. Each group of four examples of the parent category was called a cluster. The specific situations described were tailored to the population of respondents — university students — and were ones in which they might commonly find themselves. The seven cluster names and an example of each appear as Figure 1.<sup>3</sup>

1. Self Direction. I am taking successful steps in working my way to a long-term goal.
2. Absence of Responsibility. Sometimes I have no responsibilities.
3. Release from Noxious Stimulation. All day long I have had a nagging headache, and I have just realized that it is gone.
4. Recognition of Limits. Sometimes I restrict or reduce my desires to fit with what I believe a situation allows and to what I believe my abilities to be.
5. Active Decision Making. I am faced with two important, valuable, and apparently equal choices. I am now deciding between them.
6. Presence of Alternatives. Every year when I go through the university calendar and lecture schedule, I find a very large number of attractive courses which are open to me.
7. Exercise of Skilled Behaviour. At times I engage in activities with skill and confidence in my ability to perform well.

Figure 1: Seven types of situations and an example of each.

<sup>3</sup>A complete list of the situational descriptions can be obtained from the author.

Next, the 28 situational descriptions were cast into a questionnaire format as in the example shown in Figure 2. Respondents were instructed to carefully

I am doing something at which I am skilled - something I do very well.

I feel:

FREE

	-----	-----	-----	-----	
	very much	quite a lot	somewhat	very little	not at all

OPPOSITE

This situation has nothing to do with my  
feeling related to freedom and/or its opposites.

Figure 2: An example of one situational description and the response format.

consider each of the 28 situations in turn, and decide whether it had anything to do with feeling free and/or feeling any opposite to free. If so, they were to indicate the extent to which the situation contributed to *either or both* feelings by checking the appropriate point on the scale or scales chosen. In addition, if the OPPOSITE scale was used, each respondent was to supply the opposite for himself or herself for that specific situation by writing a word or phrase on the line marked OPPOSITE.<sup>4</sup> A final alternative was to declare the entire situation not relevant to feeling free or any opposite to free.

Because the questionnaire was administered in group settings, the investigator "walked through" an example of a situation and several possible options for responding to it, showing various ways in which respondents might indicate their feelings. In addition, while the questionnaire was being filled out, the investigator and his assistants circulated throughout the group to answer questions and to insure that respondents were following the format of the response sheets accurately. Maximum flexibility and thoughtfulness were emphasized, so that the respondents could most accurately report their reactions to the situations, within the constraints of the response form.

*Subjects.* Two samples of respondents ( $n = 69, 139$ ) were recruited from first- and second-year psychology courses at York University. For the samples

<sup>4</sup>The inquiry into opposites to free was carried out in order to explore some qualitative features of feeling free in the various situations. The elicitation of opposites rather than synonyms or elaborations was employed in order to focus on the bipolar dimensions along which freedom was construed. This inquiry is the subject of Study 2 in this paper.

combined, the mean age was 21.6, S.D. = 3.27; females made up 66% of the respondents and males 34%. There were no significant differences in age or sex distribution between the samples.<sup>5</sup>

### *Results and Discussion*

Because this paper concerns both methodological and substantive issues, the data presentation for Study 1 is organized around a series of five descriptive questions:

1. Are the situational descriptions shown in Figure 1 seen by respondents to be relevant to a dimension of FREE — OPPOSITE?
2. Are the different clusters of situational descriptions differentially effective in evoking reports of experienced freedom and/or its opposites?
3. Do males and females respond differently to the different kinds of situations described?
4. Can findings from one group of respondents be replicated on a second group?
5. How do the findings concerning experienced freedom relate to ideas and contentions in other literatures?

With respect to the first question, the data of interest concern the extent to which respondents actually employed the response scales provided. Recall that they had the option to declare any situation not relevant to an inquiry concerned with feeling free. Overall, on 84% of occasions, respondents employed either or both response scales at some value higher than “not at all.” The cluster most frequently seen as relevant to experienced freedom was Self Direction (Cluster 1) with 92% usage, and the least frequently relevant clusters were Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior (Clusters 3 and 7), both with 79% usage in the two samples combined. Sample 1 had a slightly higher overall usage of the scales than did Sample 2, which might be a function of the fact that Sample 1 was studied in smaller groups than was Sample 2 — there could have been greater implicit encouragement to participate and respond, simply as a function of intimacy of the situation. However, it can be concluded that, on the average, respondents found approximately 24 of the 28 situations relevant to their own individual experiences of feeling free and/or some opposite to free. The range of responsiveness across individuals was from 61% to 100%.

To answer the second question concerning the differential effectiveness of the various clusters to evoke reports of experienced freedom, Cluster Means

---

<sup>5</sup>Data cited in the text, but not presented in tables, are available from the author in complete tabular form.



were calculated.<sup>6</sup> Cluster Means are the overall mean values assigned to Scale F (FREE) and Scale O (OPPOSITE) by those who responded to each situational description. Data from respondents who declared a situation not relevant were excluded from the calculations for that item. Different Cluster Means, therefore, are based on slightly different numbers of responses.

Table 1

Cluster Means and S.D.'s for Scale F and Scale O for two samples,  
t-values and significance of differences between the two samples

		SCALE F (FREE)				
		Sample 1		Sample 2		t
		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
Clusters	1. S.D.	3.87	.71	3.93	.70	.53
	2. A.R.	3.87	.70	3.82	.88	.42
	3. R.N.	4.32	.55	4.25	.83	.79
	4. R.L.	3.06	.85	2.92	.80	1.22
	5. A.D.	2.76	1.02	3.08	.98	2.19*
	6. P.A.	3.47	.86	3.35	.86	.92
	7. S.B.	4.22	.69	4.16	.70	.54
		SCALE O ( OPPOSITE)				
		Sample 1		Sample 2		t
		$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
Clusters	1. S.D.	2.10	.97	2.11	.84	.12
	2. A.R.	1.88	.78	1.96	.82	.73
	3. R.N.	1.27	.46	1.44	.73	2.04*
	4. R.L.	2.64	.90	2.92	.90	2.14*
	5. A.D.	2.89	.88	2.81	1.26	.51
	6. P.A.	2.30	.87	2.55	1.02	1.69
	7. S.B.	1.42	.54	1.60	.65	1.90

\*  $p < .05$

<sup>6</sup>A wide variety of scoring conventions for the response scales and various statistical manipulations of the resultant data *all* yielded essentially the same findings. The conventions and analyses reported here are those deemed to be the most accurate representations of the conceptualization to which they relate, as described in the text.

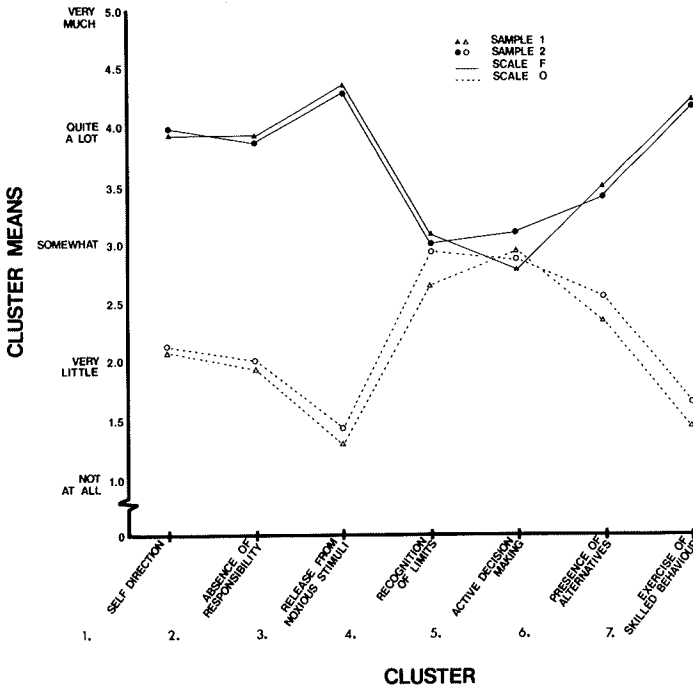


Figure 3: Profile of the extent to which two samples of respondents report feeling FREE (Scale F) and/or OPPOSITE (Scale O) in each of seven different kinds of situations.

Table 1 shows the Cluster Means and S.D.s for Scale F and Scale O for each sample separately and also shows the t-values (2-tailed) and significance of any differences between the two samples in these values for each cluster. Of the fourteen comparisons, only three show marginally significant differences, attesting to the replicability of the findings. The same data are plotted graphically in Figure 3 to show a profile of the responses to the different clusters. Table 2 is a matrix of the t-values (2-tailed) for all pair-wise differences among Cluster Means within each sample separately for Scale F and for Scale O. These calculations show that with a few important exceptions, the different clusters yield mean values on both Scale F and Scale O which differ by large and statistically significant amounts, and that the patterns shown in Sample 1 are almost perfectly replicated in Sample 2.

It appears that Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior (Clusters 3 and 7) represent the kinds of situations in which respondents report the most intense experiences of feeling free and the least

# ASPECTS OF EXPERIENCED FREEDOM

Table 2

t-values and significance of differences between all pairs of Cluster Means on Scale F and Scale O for two samples separately. The upper entry in each cell is Sample 1. The lower entry is Sample 2.

Data for Scale F are below the diagonal, for Scale O are above.

		Clusters												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7						
		S.D.	A.R.	R.N.	R.L.	A.D.	P.A.	S.B.						
Clusters	1. S.D.		1.51	6.60**	4.16**	5.30**	1.41	6.17**						
			1.36	8.64**	8.66**	5.78**	4.42**	6.48**						
	2. A.R.			5.87**	5.77**	9.25**	3.99**	4.10**						
				6.13**	9.88**	6.96**	5.50**	4.91**						
	3. R.N.				11.75**	14.14**	9.27**	1.91						
					4.09**	5.18**	15.35**	10.98**	2.44**					
	4. R.L.					1.81	2.59**	10.74**						
						12.75**	9.56**	14.84**	0.82	3.61**	15.40**			
	5. A.D.						9.53**	9.74**	11.19**	2.14**	5.79**	12.65**		
							10.42**	7.23**	10.67**	1.65	2.48**	9.95**		
	6. P.A.							4.47**	4.13**	7.86**	3.26**	6.90**	7.46**	
								7.73**	5.26**	9.82**	4.82**	3.26**	9.46**	
	7. S.B.								3.93**	3.52**	1.06	10.38**	11.46**	7.90**
									3.23**	4.16**	1.41	15.88**	11.89**	9.58**

\*\*p < .01

Scale F

Scale O

intense feelings opposite to free. Clusters 3 and 7 are not significantly different from each other on Scale F and only marginally different on Scale O. Self Direction and Absence of Responsibility (Clusters 1 and 2) are significantly lower than the preceding group on Scale F and higher on Scale O, and are not significantly different from each other on either scale for either sample. Presence of Alternatives (Cluster 6) yields Cluster Means which fall significantly below the preceding group on Scale F and above it on Scale O. In turn, Recognition of Limits and Active Decision Making (Clusters 4 and 5) fall significantly below Presence of Alternatives on Scale F and above it on Scale O. Recognition of Limits and Active Decision Making are the kinds of situations in which respondents report the least intense experiences of feeling free and the most intense feeling opposite to free.

Split-half reliabilities for the separate clusters were calculated on Sample 2 and six-week test-retest reliabilities were calculated for an additional sample ( $n = 35$ ) of respondents from the same parent population. Spearman-Brown reliabilities for the separate clusters have a median of .52 and range from .34 to .69 for Scale F and from .22 to .67 for Scale O. The test-retest reliabilities

have a median of .50 and range from .43 to .63 for Scale F and from .29 to .55 for Scale O. Internal coherence and temporal stability appear satisfactory, considering that each cluster contains only four items.

A matrix of all pair-wise intercorrelations of Cluster Means for Scale F shows that the more than 75% of Cluster Means intercorrelate positively and significantly, indicating that the different clusters may tap the same domain without being redundant. Overall, the correlations ( $r$ ) range from  $-.01$  to  $+.60$ . That the general effect is not simply response set is indicated by the fact that some clusters which are conceptually quite different from each other, e.g., Release from Noxious Stimulation and Active Decision Making (Clusters 3 and 5), are not significantly correlated ( $r = -.02, -.01$  for the two samples). The same is true for Absence of Responsibility and Recognition of Limits (Clusters 2 and 4) where the correlations are  $.03$  and  $.14$  for the two samples. The most highly correlated clusters ( $.60$  and  $.44$  for the two samples) are Active Decision Making and Presence of Alternatives (Clusters 5 and 6), which are conceptually quite similar. The pattern of correlations among the clusters is almost identical for the two samples.

The intercorrelations of Cluster Means for Scale O do not yield as stable a picture because Scale O is actually a collection of different scales for different persons, each uniquely defined by a respondent who supplies an OPPOSITE. The correlations range from  $-.07$  to  $+.54$ , and nearly half the correlations in the matrix are significant beyond the  $.05$  level. It can be concluded that the domain "opposite to free" is being tapped in more diverse ways than is the domain "free." The detailed study of OPPOSITES is the purpose of Study 2.

It is evident that the different clusters of situations do show differential power to elicit reports of feeling free, and that these differences are not only statistically significant within each sample but reliable over time and across samples drawn from the same parent population. Recall that all of the situations were presumed to contribute to freedom, either prescribed, attributed, or experienced. In this light, it is interesting that all situations *also* contributed to experiential reports of opposites to free and that in Recognition of Limits and Active Decision Making (Clusters 4 and 5), the contribution which these types of situations make to feeling free and feeling opposite to free are nearly equal (cf., Figure 3).

It is obvious in Figure 3 that the Cluster Means on Scale F and Scale O for the aggregate data are almost perfectly negatively correlated (Sample 1  $\rho = -.97$ ; Sample 2  $\rho = -.96$ ). This indicates, logically enough, that the more a situation contributes to reported experiences of freedom, the less it contributes to reported opposites. While this is true for the *aggregate* data, a comparison of Scale F and Scale O scores for *individual respondents* yields a somewhat more complex picture.

A product-moment correlation ( $r$ ) calculated between the Scale F scores and Scale O scores for each individual across the 28 items yields a distribution of correlation coefficients. This distribution ranges from a perfect -1.00 parallel to the findings on the aggregate data, through zero-order correlations, to +.69 in Sample 1, and +.39 in Sample 2. These latter are quite different from the findings on the aggregate data. The medians of these distributions are -.37 and -.75 respectively, and they are skewed strongly toward the positive end. Thus, for the bulk of individuals, the relationship between experienced freedom and its opposites is clearly inverse, but for some, the two are essentially unrelated, and for a few, the two covary positively in the situations explored.

From an Aristotelian point of view, the presence of experienced freedom should be negatively correlated with the experience of its opposites; however, from a decision-making point of view, uncertainty and conflict should be associated with experienced freedom; from an existential point of view, freedom is not only inevitable, but also disturbing. It appears that some of our respondents understand freedom from an Aristotelian orientation, others from a decision theory orientation, and yet others from an existentialist orientation. This reflects the complexity of the problem, and the fact that the complexity can be described.

With respect to Question 3, concerning sex differences, the simple answer is that there are none to be reported. None of the Cluster Means showed sex differences reaching the .05 level of significance in either sample for either scale.

Question 4, concerning replicability, has been discussed above. The findings on the two samples from the same parent population are almost identical in all of our analyses.

With the above descriptive features of the data established, it is now possible to address Question 5, concerning the relationship of the present findings to ideas found in other literatures. The results indicate that situations in which individuals are released from noxious stimulation or frustration (Cluster 3) and can engage in skilled behaviors (Cluster 7) are the strongest contributors to feeling free. These two kinds of situations are parallels to the basic negative freedom ("freedom from") and positive freedom ("freedom to") discussed in the philosophical literature. MacCallum (1967) has argued that *both* components must be present in order to make a sensible statement about freedom. In contrast, Berlin (1969) and others, in developing a logical definition of freedom, have argued that if the negative component is socially guaranteed, the positive component can become socially prescriptive, and impose obligation rather than providing freedom. However, from the individual, experiential point of view tapped here, it would appear that if the two

components are combined, maximum freedom is likely to be experienced. These two clusters, Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior, so far yield very similar data, but are conceptually very different. The differences between them will be explored in Study 2.

The next most highly contributory pair of clusters, Self Direction (Cluster 1) and Absence of Responsibility (Cluster 2), are similar to the first pair in several respects. They are both relatively high on Scale F and low on Scale O. They are not significantly different from each other on either scale for either sample, but they are conceptually quite different. Absence of Responsibility is a negative type of freedom, similar to Release from Noxious Stimulation, while Self Direction can be considered positive freedom as it entails action, similar to the Exercise of Skilled Behavior. However, as presented in the descriptions on the questionnaire (cf., Figure 1), the situations in Clusters 1 and 2 are neither as sudden in the implied affective changes, nor are the outcomes so rapid and certain as in Clusters 3 and 7. This may be the primary difference between these two pairs of clusters and it is possible that the statistically reliable differences between them shown in Table 2 could be explained on the basis of important shades of meaning and the time spans involved in the described situations. Self Direction and Absence of Responsibility are not only conceptually quite different — they could, in fact, be seen as antithetical: Self Direction clearly implies accountability for action and choice, while Absence of Responsibility explicitly denies it. Further qualitative differences between these two clusters will be discussed in Study 2.

The two least powerful contributors to experienced freedom on Scale F are Active Decision Making (Cluster 5) and Recognition of Limits (Cluster 4). They are also the highest contributors on Scale O. With respect to Active Decision Making, the attribution literature predicts theoretically (Steiner, 1970) and shows empirically (Harvey, 1976) that a high degree of freedom is attributed by observers to actors when the actors are making choices among alternatives which are almost equally attractive and available, that is, when there is both high decision freedom and high outcome freedom. The findings of the present study, while quite different, do not contradict those predictions or findings. Rather, the present data point to the marked contrast between attributed and experienced freedom, at least with respect to decision-making situations. In decision situations, where choice is not coerced by discrepancies in attractiveness or availability, actors may be seen to “be free” to a high degree by others, but they themselves do not “feel free” to a high degree.

In 1973, Steiner asserted his belief “. . . that people feel they have decision freedom — a real choice — when the options between which they choose are about equally attractive, that is, when the options offer fairly equal net gains after calculating the costs and payoffs” (Steiner, 1973, p. 52). This quotation

itself indicates the kind of potential for confusion which plagues the field, confusion between the feeling of having a real choice and feeling free. To say that an individual feels he or she has a real choice is not to say that an individual feels free. The present studies indicate that in choosing among reasonably balanced alternatives, respondents feel less free than in any of the other conditions described. If it were possible to render decision-making a skilled behavior, a considerable advance in experienced freedom might follow.

The data for Recognition of Limits (Cluster 4) fall into line with that body of philosophical thinking which asserts that maximum freedom resides in the maximum fulfillment of desires, and which argues that a reduction of desires cannot enhance freedom. On the contrary, reduction of desires must inevitably reduce freedom (cf., Berlin, 1969; Parent, 1974, p. 151). This point of view is reflected in the reports of respondents in both samples. The recognition and acceptance of existing constraints on one's choices, while identifying the limits within which one can operate unencumbered, is a feeble contributor to feeling free. This appears to be so in spite of the fact that such recognition can forewarn one about possible blunders, failures, and punishment. In this case, from the philosophical and experiential viewpoints respectively, knowing the "truth" does not make one "free," *nor* does it do much to make one "feel free."

The Presence of Alternatives (Cluster 6), with one marginal exception (see Table 2), is significantly different from all other clusters on both scales for both samples. It falls between the high and medium groups (Clusters 1, 2, 3, and 7) and the low group (Clusters 4 and 5), and conceptually, it partakes of both.

While the situations described in Cluster 6 related purely to the *presence* of alternatives, with no choice or decision required (in contrast to Cluster 5, Active Decision Making), some respondents commented that they couldn't consider the Presence of Alternatives without considering making a choice between them. To these respondents, Cluster 6 is more or less a replication of Cluster 5, or at least confounded with it. With the implication of unpressured choice, Cluster 6 may also exhibit some of the features of Self Direction (Cluster 1). Thus, Cluster 6 is in a somewhat indeterminate position — differences between this cluster and both the high and low groups can be attributed to differences in interpretation or meaning rather than to scale discontinuity, a point also made with respect to the differences between pairs of Clusters 1 and 2 versus 3 and 7.

The Presence of Alternatives (Cluster 6) is more conducive to reports of experienced freedom than is Active Decision Making (Cluster 5) or the Recognition of Limits (Cluster 4). These are precisely the relationships which are implicitly predicted by reactance theory (Brehm, 1962; Wicklund, 1974).

Reactance theory argues that when previously available alternatives are withdrawn, as in the recognition of limits on one's alternatives, or the elimination of alternatives by virtue of actually choosing among them, one's motivational state organizes behavior toward the reestablishment of those alternatives. The present findings may be taken as a demonstration that the behavioral findings of reactance research are paralleled by the reports of experienced freedom.

But the present data also support a more extended argument; individuals move from situation to situation, and one's actions or conceptualizations change with given situations from moment to moment in the ordinary flow of life. The data indicate that while the Presence of Alternatives, itself, is only a modest contributor to experienced freedom, Recognition of Limits is a strong contributor to feelings opposite to free, and Release from Noxious Stimulation (including frustration) is the strongest single contributor to experienced freedom. Thus, an experiential process can be constructed for at least the short term maximization of experienced freedom: The mere presence of alternatives contributes to a modest degree of experienced freedom, but when limits are recognized and one is obliged to make a decision, the experienced freedom is seriously diminished. However, if one can engage in skilled behavior to gain relief from the frustration of the constraints and reestablish the alternatives, and then further engage in skilled decision making, one experiences self direction and experiences oneself as maximally free. The only dimension which has not been included in this scenario is absence of responsibility, itself a strong contributor to experienced freedom, which perhaps lies outside the decision-making context described above.

The sequence described can be truncated to include what appears to be the minimum conditions for a maximum experience of freedom: the presence of alternatives and the exercise of skilled behavior in the decision-making process. It seems that if (and only if) decision making is a skilled behavior, this shortened sequence can be effective in generating a high degree of experienced freedom.

The data indicate that for the samples studied here, decision making does not seem to fall within the realm of skilled behavior and is not a striking contributor to experienced freedom. The age of the respondents may be a factor in this, although it is probable that most people find choices difficult among alternatives which are most equally available and attractive. However, a paradox remains: The only way to exercise freedom in a choice situation is to give it up by selecting one alternative while abandoning the other alternatives. Thus, any kind of choice behavior among attractive alternatives has both positive and negative features, and skilled decision making may be the action of defeating high decision freedom — the equality



of the alternatives — so as to “coerce” a choice upon the individual one way or another (cf., Westcott, 1977, pp. 256-257).

A first priority for enhancing the experience of freedom for oneself or for others is the development of skilled behaviors, and especially skilled decision-making behaviors. The provision of alternatives, e.g., in educational settings or political or social settings, without the necessary training to make decision-making a skilled behavior, does not appear to be a suitable method of enhancing the experience of freedom. Difficult and unskilled decision-making seems to do exactly the opposite. Our society has been preoccupied with providing alternatives without noticeable concern for the development of skills for choosing *between* alternatives in ways which enhance the experience of freedom (Platt, 1973). Enhancing the experience of human freedom is a central concern of humanistic psychotherapies (cf., Enns, Note 1), and one may find, paradoxically, that behavioristic interventions which emphasize rapid symptom relief and the teaching of skills may be uniquely valuable in serving this end.

Finally, with respect to enhancing the experience of freedom, comes the ethical question as to whether this is simply the enhancement of an illusion. Lefcourt (1973) has *explicitly* called freedom an illusion, but has also pointed out the adaptive consequences of perceived freedom in human behavior; Steiner (1970) has called freedom “at least an important illusion”; and still, Skinner (1972) has called the study of this illusion “mischievous.” There is, however, a distinction to be drawn between the concept of social freedom and the concept of freedom of choice as a metaphysical truth.

The former ideally involves an enhancement of alternatives, the skill to choose among them, and the accompanying experience of oneself as free; the latter is a metaphysical contrast to determinism in human affairs (cf., Oppenheim, 1961; Westcott, 1977). The two notions come from very different realms of discourse and should not be confused. Multiple realms of discourse represent another of the plagues of this area of inquiry. Making these points certainly does not resolve the ethical dilemma, but it may point to some complexities which are not immediately obvious.

In Study 1 we have explored the extent to which respondents report that they feel free in several theoretical important types of situations, and the extent to which they experience some opposite to free in those same situations. Study 2 is concerned with the qualitative features of feeling free.

### **Study 2: Qualitative Features of Experienced Freedom**

Philosophical literature employs the term “unfree” as a more or less universal opposite to “free.” However, the term “unfree” is certainly not

common in our ordinary language and appears to be particularly unsatisfactory when studying the psychological construction of human experience. Therefore, the investigation reported below followed other leads, ranging from folk wisdom to epistemology to psychological theory.

The folk wisdom is reflected in the classic two-liner:<sup>7</sup>

Pat: How's your wife?

Mike: Compared to what?

The epistemological lead is represented in one of the primary meanings of the term "dialectic" (Rychlak, 1975). This classical meaning focuses on the elucidation of a concept by reference to its contrasts and opposites, and asserts that any concept may have a multitude of such contrasts and opposites.

The third lead, rooted in psychological theory, relies on the *Psychology of Personal Constructs* (Kelly, 1955). Kelly argues that humans construe their experience along bipolar dimensions, and that every assertion about one's experience implies a continuum ranging from the stated qualitative feature of a situation, or person, or thing ("nice," "frightening") to some contrast. The former is the explicit pole of the bipolar dimension and the latter (contrast) is often, or even usually, implicit. The hierarchical network of these bipolar dimensions along which individuals construe their experience are their personal construct systems by which they anticipate events. For any explicit pole, there may be different implicit poles for different individuals under what appear to be the same conditions, or different implicit poles for the same individual under different conditions. Kelly's point of view is consonant with the broader notion that human consciousness is dialectical in nature.

### *Method*

In situations where respondents reported feelings opposite to free (Scale O), they supplied their own specific descriptive adjectives or phrases. These OPPOSITEs are viewed as the implicit poles of various bipolar constructs of feeling free. The resultant dimensions along which respondents construe feeling free are taken to represent some of the qualitative features of experienced freedom.

Through repeated examination, the OPPOSITEs supplied were coded into seven content categories, plus an "uncodable," by two independent coders. The raw frequencies with which each code category was represented in each cluster of situations was determined, and the rank order of use of each

---

<sup>7</sup>de Charms (1968, footnote p. 343) attributes the response to a psychologist. I believe I heard it from the silver lips of Myron Cohen, although not in the Pat and Mike format.

code category was determined within each cluster for each sample. Comparisons among clusters in terms of the opposite code usage was carried out by means of coefficients of concordance and rank order correlations.

### *Results and Discussion*

The results of Study 2 are presented in response to a series of descriptive questions:

1. Do respondents supply a variety of OPPOSITES to FREE?
2. Can the OPPOSITES supplied be coded reliably into meaningful categories?
3. Do the different clusters evoke different patterns of OPPOSITES?
4. Are findings from Sample 1 replicated on Sample 2?
5. Do rational groupings of clusters (e.g., active vs. passive clusters; clusters similar or dissimilar on Scale F) yield similarities of OPPOSITE code usages within groupings, and dissimilarities between groupings?
6. Do males and females show different qualitative features of experienced freedom through different patterns of OPPOSITE code use?
7. What statements can be made about qualitative features of experienced freedom in the different clusters of situations?

With respect to the first question, respondents in Sample 1 ( $N = 69$ ) provided a total of 841 OPPOSITE responses (44% of the possible maximum)<sup>8</sup> including 170 *different* words or phrases as specifications of OPPOSITE to FREE. Sample 2 ( $N = 139$ ) provided 1740 OPPOSITE responses (45% of the possible maximum) including 45 *new* terms. Thus, a total of 224 discriminable terms or phrases were provided as variants of the philosophers' generic "unfree." Many of the terms or phrases were very similar, such as "boxed in," "boxed up," "cornered," "trapped," or "anxious," "uneasy," "worried," "upset." These similarities, of course, were the bases for the development of code categories.

With respect to the second question, Figure 4 shows the seven substantive categories of OPPOSITES that were derived, plus the "uncodable," with several examples of each. For the first sample, two independent coders reached an initial agreement of 93% in coding, and disagreements were resolved by discussion. In Sample 2, two independent coders, employing the decisions and conventions reached with Sample 1, attained 98% agreement

---

<sup>8</sup>If all respondents supplied an OPPOSITE for each situation, the maximum possible would be  $28 \times 69 = 1932$  for Sample 1 and  $28 \times 139 = 3892$  for Sample 2.

on an initial coding, with the disagreements again resolved by discussion.<sup>9</sup>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <u>Diffuse unpleasant affect</u><br>(anxious, bored, overwhelmed)  | 5. <u>Coercion from without</u><br>(scheduled, controlled, dominated)      |
| 2. <u>Diffuse pressure</u><br>(rushed, burdened, hassled)             | 6. <u>Coercion from within</u><br>(obligated, responsible, committed)      |
| 3. <u>Prevention from without</u><br>(restricted, stifled, trapped)   | 7. <u>Conflict and indecision</u><br>(conflicted, undecided, uncertain)    |
| 4. <u>Prevention from within</u><br>(dormant, inhibited, incompetent) | 8. <u>Other, uncodable, illegible</u><br>(dieting, changes, introspective) |

Figure 4: Code categories for OPPOSITES to FREE and examples of each.

Table 3 shows the raw frequency with which each code category was used in each cluster for the two samples separately. In brackets are the rank orders of use for each OPPOSITE code *within* each cluster (columns). The column

Table 3  
Distribution of OPPOSITE code use by Cluster for two samples.

The upper entry in each cell is Sample 1 and the lower is Sample 2.

The entries are raw frequencies and rank within Clusters in brackets.

Cluster totals (column sums) are also ranked as are OPPOSITE code totals (row sums).

	Cluster							Σ	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
	S.D.	A.R.	R.N.	R.L.	A.D.	P.A.	S.B.		
OPPOSITE Code	1. Diffuse unpleasant affect	25 (2) 38 (3)	62 (1) 110 (1)	10 (2) 38 (1)	23 (2) 47 (2)	15 (4) 34 (3.5)	21 (3) 39 (3)	11 (2) 19 (3)	167 (2) 325 (2)
	2. Diffuse pressure	10 (5) 22 (6)	0 (8) 8 (7)	2 (6) 3 (6)	1 (8) 7 (8)	27 (3) 34 (3.5)	14 (4) 31 (4)	2 (7) 12 (5.5)	56 (4) 117 (5)
	3. Prevention from without	38 (1) 71 (1)	24 (2) 45 (2)	18 (1) 29 (2)	121 (1) 189 (1)	79 (1) 126 (1)	58 (1) 101 (1)	19 (1) 30 (2)	357 (1) 591 (1)
	4. Prevention from within	1 (8) 12 (8)	14 (3) 21 (4)	3 (5) 1 (8)	8 (4) 19 (5)	0 (8) 5 (8)	8 (5) 5 (8)	5 (5) 11 (7)	39 (7) 74 (8)
	5. Coercion from without	9 (6) 24 (5)	2 (5.5) 1 (8)	5 (3.5) 2 (7)	11 (3) 35 (3)	7 (5) 14 (6)	4 (7) 9 (7)	3 (6) 12 (5.5)	41 (5.5) 97 (7)
	6. Coercion from within	20 (4) 52 (2)	5 (4) 24 (3)	0 (8) 6 (5)	2 (7) 13 (6.5)	1 (7) 24 (5)	5 (6) 19 (5)	8 (3) 31 (1)	41 (5.5) 169 (4)
	7. Conflict and indecision	22 (3) 29 (4)	1 (7) 9 (6)	1 (7) 7 (4)	7 (5) 31 (4)	50 (2) 93 (2)	33 (2) 76 (2)	6 (4) 8 (8)	120 (3) 253 (3)
	8. Other, uncodable, illegible	4 (7) 14 (7)	2 (5.5) 18 (5)	5 (3.5) 28 (3)	3 (6) 13 (6.5)	5 (6) 9 (7)	1 (8) 14 (6)	1 (8) 18 (4)	21 (8) 114 (6)
Σ	129 (4) 262 (4)	110 (5) 236 (5)	44 (7) 114 (7)	176 (2) 354 (1)	184 (1) 339 (2)	144 (3) 294 (3)	55 (6) 141 (6)	841 1740	

EE

<sup>9</sup>A different set of codes might be used, or several of those actually employed might be telescoped on rational grounds: e.g., Codes 1, 2, and 7 might be combined as experienced unpleasantness; Codes 3 and 4 might be combined as prevention, Codes 5 and 6 might be combined as coercions. The usefulness of these codings would depend on the questions one cared to ask.

totals are also ranked, reflecting the relative total use of all OPPOSITES within clusters. Finally, the row totals are ranked, reflecting the relative total use of the various OPPOSITES collapsed across clusters.

Before proceeding with a detailed analysis of the patterns of OPPOSITES, it should be noted that the rank-orders of the row totals (overall use of each OPPOSITE code) for the two samples are highly correlated ( $\rho = .82; p < .05$ ). In addition, the rank orders of the column totals (combined use of all OPPOSITES within each cluster) for the two samples, are correlated almost perfectly ( $\rho = .97, p < .01$ ). Thus, Table 3 shows a very strong replication of the overall OPPOSITES data for the two samples.

The same can be said, generally, for the individual Clusters. The rank-order correlations between OPPOSITE code use by the two samples in the clusters range from .45 to .96, with only clusters 3 and 7 being below .80. Thus, the cluster-by-cluster replication is also strong. Clusters 3 and 7, it should be noted, have the lowest raw frequencies of OPPOSITES (cf., Table 3) which would lead to less stable patterns across samples. Thus it appears that the terms supplied as OPPOSITES to free can be coded reliably, and that the distribution of OPPOSITES found in the first sample is replicated strongly in the second.

Several different statistical analyses were performed to investigate question 3 concerning patterns of OPPOSITE use in the different clusters. First, an overall coefficient of concordance (Kendall's  $w$ , cf., Siegel, 1956, pp. 229ff), and subsequently, rank order correlations ( $\rho$ ) were employed to compare pairs or groups of clusters with each other in terms of the rank order of use of the various OPPOSITE code categories.<sup>10</sup>

*The clusters considered as a group.* The data in Table 3 yield highly significant coefficients of concordance among the rank orders of OPPOSITE code use across all clusters for both samples. For Sample 1,  $w = .564, p < .001$  and for Sample 2,  $w = .583, p < .001$ . This means that there is significant general agreement on the nature of the OPPOSITES to feeling free, regardless of the kind of situation in which the opposite is expressed. *Prevention from Without* (code 3) is by far the most frequently used OPPOSITE, and always ranks first or second, while *Diffuse Unpleasant Affect* (code 1) never ranks lower than fourth. *Conflict and Indecision* (code 7), while somewhat more variable in its ranking from cluster to cluster, is third in overall use. These statements are true for both samples. Thus, it can be said that there is something like a "G" factor in feeling free — the contrast with feeling *Prevention from Without*, the contrast with feeling *Diffuse Unpleasant*

<sup>10</sup>In the following discussion, for the sake of clarity, OPPOSITE code names will be presented in italics while cluster names will be in standard face type.

*Affect*, and the contrast with feeling *Conflict and Indecision*. Both Berlin (1958, 1969) and Parent (1974) emphasize that from their philosophical viewpoints, external obstructions and/or interventions are the primary sources of the erosion of freedom. In a complimentary fashion, Enns (Note 1) has argued that from the point of view of psychopathology and psychotherapy, fears and anxieties are fundamental blocks to effective behavior and to the experience of oneself as free. The data show that *Prevention from Without* and *Diffuse Unpleasant Affect*, then, are conditions that one must be "free from" in order to experience oneself as free, attesting again to the primacy of negative liberty or non-interference.

*Conflict and Indecision*, which ranks third overall in use, suggests an inability to get on with action, a lack of "positive liberty" or "freedom to" as described by MacCallum (1967). Thus, we find basic negative liberty (the lack of interference) and positive liberty (the ability to act) as the primary components of experienced freedom. While this is in accord with much philosophical reasoning and clinical theorizing (cf., Enns, Note 1; Westcott, 1978), it has not previously been demonstrated through systematic empirical study of reported human experience.

In spite of the highly significant overall concordance reported above, a matrix of rank order correlations of OPPOSITE code use between all pairs of clusters for the two samples shows both significant and non-significant correlations ranging from  $\rho = -.13$  to  $+.97$ . That is, there are both similarities and differences in the qualitative features of experienced freedom in the different clusters.

To summarize the preceding analyses, the OPPOSITES supplied can be coded reliably into meaningful categories, and are distributed across the clusters in patterns which are replicated in the two samples. There is general agreement concerning the nature of the opposites to feeling free, and the most frequently cited OPPOSITES are *Prevention from Without*, *Diffuse Unpleasant Affects*, and *Conflict and Indecision*. There are both similarities and differences among the clusters in the patterns of OPPOSITES use, and these are the focus of the next section.

*Clusters which are qualitatively similar and quantitatively different.* Most pairs of clusters show non-significant correlations in their patterns of OPPOSITES use. However, Self Direction, Active Decision Making, and Presence of Alternatives (Clusters 1, 5, and 6) show large and significant positive intercorrelations ( $\rho$  ranges between .74 and .97) replicated in both samples. These three types of situations are highly interrelated qualitatively, while they are all significantly different from each other in the quantitative data, i.e., the Cluster Means, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2. These three kinds of situations evoke reliably similar qualities of feeling free to reliably

different degrees. The same can be said for Cluster pairs 7/1 and 7/2. The quality of the experience of feeling free in the Exercise of Skilled Behavior overlaps with the feeling evoked under conditions of Self Direction and conditions of Absence of Responsibility ( $\rho$  ranges between .64 and .81). Yet, Cluster 7 is quantitatively different from both Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 (Table 1, Table 2).

*Clusters which are quantitatively similar and qualitatively different.* In contrast to the preceding observations, Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior (Cluster 3 and 7) are not significantly different in the quantitative data of Tables 1 and 2, yet are not significantly correlated in the rank order of use of OPPOSITES ( $\rho = .27$  and  $.52$  for the two samples). That is, feeling free is reported to the same high degree in the two kinds of situations, but is construed differently. The same statement can be made about Self Direction and Absence of Responsibility (Clusters 1 and 2): Feeling free in these situations is quantitatively the same (Tables 1 and 2) but qualitatively different ( $\rho = .35$  and  $.55$  for the two samples). This is also the case with Recognition of Limits and Active Decision Making (Clusters 4 and 5), where  $\rho = .44$  and  $.43$  for the two samples. Thus, the qualitative similarities and differences shown in Table 3 are not systematically related to the quantitative similarities and differences shown in Tables 1 and 2.

The finer details of the differences in opposite code usage in the different Clusters are instructive. The two types of situations which contribute most strongly to experienced freedom are Release from Noxious Stimulation and Exercise of Skilled Behavior (Clusters 3 and 7), but these situations show strong differences in the extent to which *Coercion from Within* is identified as eroding the experience. *Coercion from Within* (Code 6) is a high ranking OPPOSITE to feeling free in the Exercise of Skilled Behavior (ranks 3 and 1 for the two samples), but is seldom used in situations of Release from Noxious Stimulation (ranks 5 and 8).

The OPPOSITES data also show differences between situations of Self Direction and Absence of Responsibility (Clusters 1 and 2). These are not different in the quantitative data, but Self Direction tends to be opposed by *Conflict and Indecision* (ranks 3 and 4 in the two samples) and *not by Prevention from Within* (ranks 8 in both samples). In contrast, Absence of Responsibility is opposed by *Prevention from Within* (ranks 3 and 4 for the two samples) but far less by *Conflict and Indecision* (ranks 6 and 7 for the two samples).

The two feeblest contributors to experienced freedom, Recognition of Limits and Active Decision Making (Clusters 4 and 5) differ in the qualitative data with respect to the importance of *Diffuse Pressure*, *Prevention from Within*, and *Conflict and Indecision* as contrasts to feeling free. It is evident

that in subtle ways, respondents construe their experiences of freedom along different dimensions in different contexts, even though they may report essentially equivalent degrees of feeling free in those contexts. It should be remembered, however, that reported *Prevention from Without* and *Diffuse Unpleasant Affect* exert their powerful negative effects on experienced freedom in all these kinds of situations.

*“Active” and “passive” clusters.* Among the seven clusters, it is also possible to identify “active” and “passive” situations and to examine them with respect to their qualitative features. Self Direction, Active Decision Making, and Exercise of Skilled Behavior (Clusters 1, 5, and 7) can be designated rationally as “active.” In contrast, Absence of Responsibility, Release from Noxious Stimulation, and Recognition of Limits (Clusters 2, 3, and 4) can be designated as “passive” clusters. Cluster 6 (Presence of Alternatives) is excluded from this analysis because of its indeterminate status between the simple availability of options and the act of choosing among them, as discussed earlier.

Each group of three clusters was examined first for internal coherence by means of Kendall’s coefficient of concordance ( $w$ ). Next, comparison between the two groups of three clusters was made by summing the raw frequencies of OPPOSITE code use within each group of three, re-ranking the totals, and calculating a rank-order correlation between the groups.

The data yield coefficients of concordance for the three “active” clusters which are statistically significant for both samples. For Sample 1,  $w = .762$  ( $p < .05$ ) and for Sample 2,  $w = .684$  ( $p < .05$ ). For the three “passive” clusters, Sample 1 yields  $w = .799$  ( $p < .02$ ) and Sample 2 yields  $w = .671$  ( $p < .05$ ). Thus, the “active” clusters are qualitatively similar to each other in terms of patterns of OPPOSITE code use, the “passive” clusters are similarly coherent, and the findings are replicated on two samples.

The summed and re-ranked frequencies of OPPOSITE code use within each of the above groups of three clusters show the following: the rank order correlation of OPPOSITE code use between “active” and “passive” clusters is .17 and .50 for the two samples and neither is significant. In addition, the patterns of OPPOSITE use for the “active” clusters correlate significantly across the two samples ( $\rho = .91$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the same is true for the “passive” clusters ( $\rho = .64$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

The principal qualitative differences between the “active” and “passive” clusters lie in the importance of *Prevention from Within*, *Diffuse Pressure* and *Conflict and Indecision* (Codes 2, 4, and 7), as opposites to feeling free. Specifically, in the “active” clusters *Prevention from Within* ranks very low (rank 8) while in the “passive” clusters its use is moderate (ranks 3 and 6). The reverse is true with respect to *Diffuse Pressure*: In the “active” clusters its



ranks are moderate (4, 5) while in the "passive" clusters this code ranks last for both samples. Finally, there appears to be a difference in the use of *Conflict and Indecision*. This code ranks second in use in the "active" clusters, while it ranks 4 and 6 for the two samples in the "passive" clusters.

In spite of these important differences between feeling free in "active" and "passive" situation, a portion of the "G" factor still shows through: OPPOSITE Code 3, *Prevention from Without*, still ranks first in both the "active" and "passive" clusters for both samples. This, of course, may be a function of our language. Perhaps most "opposites" to "free" available in the English language imply external prevention, as attested to by the fundamental concept of negative liberty so central to philosophical considerations; and so it may be in experience, since our language helps to shape our experience.

*Sex differences.* Just as there were no reliable quantitative differences in the ways in which males and females responded to the questionnaire, the rank order correlations between male and female OPPOSITE code usage for the seven clusters separately are generally strong. They range from .34 to .99 and of the 14 correlation coefficients for the two samples, all are positive, and nine are significant beyond the .05 level. Of the five which fail to reach this criterion, three are in Clusters 3 and 7, the clusters with the smallest frequencies of opposite use to begin with, which are further reduced after dividing the samples by sex. There appear to be no important and replicated sex differences in the qualitative aspects of experienced freedom.

### Summary and Conclusions

This paper has explored a method for systematic inquiry into reports of experienced freedom, as distinguished from prescribed freedom and attributed freedom. Study 1 was concerned with the extent to which respondents report that they feel free under conditions which are prescribed as freedom-inducing in the philosophical literature, conditions under which freedom is attributed in the attribution literature, conditions by which freedom is defined in the reactance literature, and conditions reported as contributing to feeling free in common parlance, elicited from earlier interview studies.

The data indicated that the philosophical prescriptions of positive and negative liberty, i.e., "freedom from" and "freedom to," are reflected strongly in reported experience. The common-sense notions of freedom as the absence of responsibility and the presence of self direction are the next most potent contributors, while the presence of alternatives, an idea central to reactance theory, is only a modest contributor. Decision freedom, a powerful contributor to the attribution of freedom to others, is a very meager contributor to feeling free, as is recognition of the limits on oneself in a given situation. To

the extent that individuals and groups are asking, striving, demanding, and fighting for freedom, it is crucial to know what conditions contribute to this experience.

The generalizations to be made from the data must be constrained by the characteristics of the respondents sampled: young, intelligent, among the most fortunate members of a basically open society. It is, however, a society which values individuality and initiative and has explicit commitments to guaranteeing choices and options, without necessarily guaranteeing the development of skills for making choices or electing options. It may well be — and probably would be — that younger persons or older persons, or persons in less favoured circumstances and in different cultures would report quite different conditions contributing to their experiences of freedom.

The stability and replicability of the data suggest that the method employed is useful, and that direct inquiry into an area as complex as experienced human freedom need not be feared as a plunge into vague subjectivity. Further, it is expected that attribution studies can be carried out through the situational description method used here. Such studies are currently in progress, and it will be interesting to see if the quantitative features of the attribution of freedom to others or to the self in a series of situations parallels or diverges from the reports of feeling free in the same situations.

Study 2 was concerned with an examination of the qualitative features of experienced freedom in the different kinds of situations. A dialectical method was employed responding to both the philosophical principle of elucidating a concept by reference to its contrasts and opposites, and from the point of view of the psychology of personal constructs: Individuals construe their experience along bipolar dimensions. Respondents who felt some opposite to free in any of the situations provided their own opposites, which were reliably coded into several content categories. The results, which were strongly replicated on the two samples, showed that the method can be used to tap qualitative characteristics of responses which are missed by purely quantitative data gathering.

The most common opposites to feeling free include feeling blocked by external forces, feeling diffuse unpleasant affect, and feeling conflicted or uncertain. These three opposites to feeling free are important in almost all the situations tapped, yet differences among the various situations remain. For example, the qualitative features of freedom experienced in active situations, such as self-direction, decision-making, and exercise of skilled behavior, are similar, as shown by significant concordance among their opposites. The same is true of the qualitative features of freedom experienced in passive situations such as the absence of responsibility, release from noxious stimula-

tion, and the recognition of limits. However, the qualitative features of the experience of freedom in the active and passive situations are not correlated. No significant sex differences were found in any of the analyses.

Thus, it appears entirely possible to make direct inquiry into both quantitative and qualitative features of experienced freedom and to generate replicable data which both complements and contrasts with data and assertions arising from related realms of inquiry. It also seems possible that research in this format can illuminate some critical and practical concerns of our time.

### Reference Notes

1. Enns, K. The experience of freedom in psychotherapy and behaviour change. *Department of Psychology Reports*, York University, Toronto, 1975, 14.
2. Enns, K. Freedom related variables and psychological well-being. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, York University, Toronto, 1980.

### References

- Berlin, I. *Two concepts of liberty*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958.
- Berlin, I. *Four essays on liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Boring, E. When is human behavior predetermined? *Scientific Monthly*, 1957, 84, 189-196.
- Brehm, J. *A theory of psychological reactance*. New York: Academic Press, 1966.
- Brehm, J., & Cohen, A. *Explorations in cognitive dissonance*. New York: Wiley, 1962.
- Danziger, K. On the threshold of the new psychology: situating Wundt and James. In W. Bringmann and R. Tweney (Eds.), *Wundt studies/Wundt Studien*, Göttingen: Hogrefe, 1980, 363-379.
- de Charms, R. *Personal causation*. New York: Academic Press, 1968.
- de Charms, R. *Enhancing motivation: change in the classroom*. New York: Irvington Publishers, 1976.
- de Charms, R. Personal causation and perceived control. In L. Perlmutter, & R. Monty (Eds.), *Choice and perceived control*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1979, 29-39.
- Dewey, R., & Gould, J. (Eds.). *Freedom: its history, nature, and varieties*. New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- Fromm, E. *Escape from freedom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1941.
- Gibbs, B. *Freedom and liberation*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1976.
- Giorgi, A. *Psychology as a human science*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
- Gold, H. The dissidents Solzhenitsyn left behind. *Newsweek*, 1974, April 8, 12-13.
- Gurwitz, S., & Panciera, L. Attributions of freedom by actors and observers. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1975, 35, 531-539.
- Harré, R. *Social being*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.
- Harré, R., & Secord, P. *The explanation of social behaviour*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1972.
- Harvey, J. Attribution of freedom. In J. Harvey, J. Ickes, & R. Kidd (Eds.), *New directions in attribution research*, Vol. 1. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1976, 73-96.
- Harvey, J., Harris, B., & Barnes, R. Actor-observer differences in the perceptions of responsibility and freedom. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1975, 32, 22-28.
- Kelly, G. *The psychology of personal constructs*, (2 vols.). New York: Norton, 1955.
- Koch, W. The nature and limits of psychological knowledge: lessons of a century *qua* "science." *American Psychologist*, 1981, 36, 257-269.
- Lefcourt, H. The function of the illusions of control and freedom. *American Psychologist*, 1973, 28, 417-425.

- MacCallum, G. Negative and positive freedom. *Philosophical Review*, 1967, 76, 312-334.
- May, R. *Love and will*. New York: Norton, 1969.
- Oppenheim, F. *Dimensions of freedom*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961.
- Parent, W. Some recent work on the concept of liberty. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1974, 11, 149-167.
- Petrinovich, L. Probabilistic functionalism: a conception of research method. *American Psychologist*, 1979, 34, 373-390.
- Platt, J. Social traps. *American Psychologist*, 1973, 28, 641-651.
- Rychlak, J. The multiple meanings of "dialectic." In J. Rychlak (Ed.), *Contributions to human development*, Vol. 2. Basel: Karger, 1976, 1-17.
- Siegel, S. *Nonparametric statistics for the behavioral sciences*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956.
- Silverman, I. Why social psychology fails. *Canadian Psychological Review*, 1977, 18, 353-358.
- Skinner, B. *Beyond freedom and dignity*. New York: Bantam, 1972.
- Smith, M. Is social psychology advancing? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1972, 8, 86-96.
- Steiner, I. Perceived freedom. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*. New York: Academic Press, 1970, 187-248.
- Steiner, I. The illusion of freedom is no mirage. *Psychology Today*, 1973, August, 51-55.
- Steiner, I. Three kinds of reported choice. In L. Perlmutter & R. Monty (Eds.), *Choice and perceived control*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1979, 17-27.
- Valle, R., & King, M. (Eds.). *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.
- Westcott, M. Free will: an exercise in metaphysical truth or psychological consequences. *Canadian Psychological Review*, 1977, 18, 249-263.
- Westcott, M. Toward psychological studies of human freedom. *Canadian Psychological Review*, 1978, 19, 277-290.
- Westcott, M. Direct and dialectical semantics of human freedom. *Etcetera: a review of general semantics*, 1981, 38(1), 64-75.
- Wicklund, R. *Freedom and reactance*. Potomac, Maryland: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1974.