

## Natural Science and Human Science Approaches to the Study of Human Freedom

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Since antiquity, human freedom has been a subject of scholarly discussion, and dozens of different conceptions of human freedom have been propounded. These conceptions have mostly been prescriptive, stating conditions under which persons are free by definition. Psychologists have approached the subject more empirically, but the use of natural science approaches embedded in a positivist conception of knowledge have added little to our understanding of the nature of human freedom. In contrast, human science approaches, employing direct phenomenological inquiry are beginning to elucidate human freedom as experienced and as lived.

There can hardly be a human concern which cries out more loudly for phenomenological investigation than human freedom. Since antiquity, the topic has received sustained attention from many quarters, but almost always from the outside—in the form of third-person description or prescription. There is a vast philosophical literature which includes notions of human freedom which range from the *maximum fulfillment of desire* to the *abandonment of all desire*; from those positions which prescribe freedom as *rendering one's desires in accord with possibilities*, to those which argue that *reducing desires can never increase freedom*. Ideas are included in which the hallmark of freedom is in the *carrying out of acts*, while other theorists argue that the critical feature of freedom is *simple non-interference*. There are positions which claim that *the state does nothing but erode freedom* and other positions which claim that *freedom is only possible through collectivization and the state*. There are, indeed, views of freedom to suit every taste: any boon or bane can be justified in the name of freedom (cf. Westcott, 1978).

Perhaps the most heroic effort to sort out these meanings of the term was carried out by the Institute for Philosophical Research, under the direction of

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Mortimer Adler, and published in two volumes in 1958 and 1961 (Adler, 1973). The list of works cited and reviewed runs to 40 pages, and this project was able to reduce the various treatments of freedom to three main formats:

(1) *Circumstantial freedom of self-realization*—which focuses on the circumstances of non-interference and the availability of both options and the capacities to pursue them. This is the format of freedom we most generally think of—the existence of circumstances in which one can fulfill desires.

(2) *Acquired freedom of self-perfection*—which means attaining a state in which one “wills what one ought” or truly desires the good, or alternatively, reaches a state of perfection where one is free from all desire. This is less often immediately thought of in ordinary life, but is certainly common within the framework of various religious or political ideologies.

(3) *Natural freedom of self-determination*—which focuses on the capacity to initiate action, to make choices; in fact, under favourable circumstances, to be the genuine master of one’s actions.

Adler claims that “We have found no *theory* that cannot be classified as consisting in either (a) one of these conceptions exclusively, (b) two or more of these conceptions as distinct, or (c) a single conception that combines two or more aspects of freedom which other theories conceived as distinct freedoms” (Adler, 1973, p. 589). I cite all of this to indicate that a great deal of careful and thoughtful work has gone into the task of describing the meaning of the term “freedom” in a wide variety of contexts. But in all these philosophical studies, little attention is paid to the experience of people in circumstances which are said to contribute to human freedom.

In contrast, other disciplines such as history, anthropology, and psychology traditionally are concerned with human experience and behavior. It is also characteristic of these disciplines which attempt systematic observation that they are generally more concerned with what *is* than with what *ought to be*.

Historians (e.g., Muller, 1960, 1963a, 1963b) have traced the structures of society which were considered the sources of freedom and the sources of restrictions on freedom. For example, Muller (1963a) points out that the relationship between master and slave in ancient Egypt was almost fully reciprocal in the sense of requirements and responsibilities, and the slave had as much power over the master as the master had over the slave. The complete one-sidedness that we think of in a master-slave relationship is a much more modern invention, and an incompatibility of slavery and freedom is inherent in only particular forms of that relationship.

Anthropologists such as Bidney (1963), Lee (1959), and Malinowski (1944) have turned their attention to freedom and its relationship to alternative forms of civilization and culture. While they have not reached a consensus on the ways in which freedom exists within various cultures and societies, they do appear to be in agreement that freedom can exist in a society only in the context of restraint, usually in the form of law. Lee (1959) is especially

forceful on this point, and argues that without constraint, no action is possible. The construction of a building must have some order—there are some things you cannot do if you want a building to result. In social life, the conduct of interpersonal relations requires conventions to be followed, constraints to be observed, or else interpersonal events do not happen. Almost universally, anthropologists consider freedom a good and anarchy an evil. They often focus on the necessity not only of constraint, but of discipline. This is most clearly shown in societies which have particularly rigorous *rites de passage*, where the attainment of both the privilege and the skill to engage in the activities enjoyed by persons of a higher status are dependent upon severe discipline.

But other positions are represented here as well. Lee (1963) focuses on the process of movement from “being able to” to “doing.” She uses the example of Jews in Nazi concentration camps. Although deprived of almost every ordinary freedom and every aspect of their ordinary identities, some, on their way to inevitable extermination, sang, while others did not. Those who retained the thrust to *do* remained free, while those who had lost the will to act did not, according to Lee. This particular view of freedom is not easy to accept in this extreme example, but it does partake of the notion of freedom as the doing of what can be done, given the objective constraints of a situation, however severe.

Lee speaks of a culture being comprised of “enabling structures” which include both facilitating mechanisms and ordering constraints. One must have the knowledge of these as well as the skills to use them in order to act freely and effectively within them. She sees adversarial relationships between the human being and the environment as a function of language conventions which treat the person and the environment as separate, closed, systems. In contrast she cites Eskimo and American Indian language traditions (1963, pp. 68-69) which are centrally phenomenological. Neither person nor environment exist without the other. Between them, they co-constitute the world. Without the environmental and cultural context, the person is *not*, and without the engaged and experiencing person, the environment is *not*. It is not a question of the person adapting to the environment or the environment being modified by the person: it is a case of the two creating each other. Full participation in this creation is freedom.

Although the historical and anthropological approaches have their roots in empirical observation, they fall short of generating evidence in support of the positions taken. They remain essentially conceptual efforts which in many respects are difficult to distinguish from the philosophical studies. However, psychological studies have generated systematic data concerning human freedom from two perspectives. Mainstream psychology employs a natural science perspective which is characterized by a positivist conception of knowledge, the demand for operational definitions, a tendency toward reduc-

tionism, the manipulation of variables, and ideally, laboratory experimentation. A human science perspective argues that the former produces an impoverished view of human behavior and experience, and ignores those features of human behavior which are peculiarly human (cf. Gergen, 1982; Giorgi, 1970; Harré and Secord, 1972; Reason and Rowan, 1981). The human science perspective attempts to study human behavior in its full complexity, as lived, and it is willing to take direct reports of experience and personal accounts of behavior as data. The two approaches produce very different kinds of findings even when they study the same problem, such as human freedom.

### Natural Science Psychological Approaches

#### *Reactance*

The most extensive body of recent psychological literature on human freedom is the literature arising from reactance theory. Originally propounded in 1966 by Brehm, this research tradition has developed through extensive journal publication and two subsequent books (Brehm and Brehm, 1981; Wicklund, 1974). The psychological condition called reactance is said to develop when an individual's behavioral freedom is threatened or eliminated, and this state has predictable consequences. It is assumed that an individual has a set of free behaviors or options when he or she has both the opportunity and the skills to engage in several different courses of action. When this state of affairs is eliminated or threatened with elimination, reactance is aroused. It is important to note several features which provide further specification of this statement: First, behavioral freedoms are defined *internally and subjectively*, that is, they are based on the individual's perceptions and beliefs; second, threat or elimination of freedoms is also internally and subjectively determined; third, reactance is defined in two different ways—as an experience and as a motivational state.

The primary consequence of the arousal of reactance is the organization of behavior in such a way as to reinstate the lost or threatened options or behavioral freedom. Alternative consequences include hostility, aggression, encouraging others to engage in the eliminated behavior, engaging in related behaviors, or at least experiencing some increased motivation to have or to do that which has been threatened or eliminated.

From the above specifications, it would appear that this theory lends itself to phenomenological investigation, but that has not happened, for there are several other features to be noted. Specifically, there is no assumption that an individual will be aware of reactance, in spite of the fact that it is described as an experience, although an individual should feel an increased amount of self-direction in regard to his or her own behavior (Brehm, 1966, p. 9). Further, even if an individual is aware of reactance, or attendant hostility, he

or she may deny it. In addition, many of the actions which an individual might take to reinstate threatened or eliminated freedoms may be seen as "uncivilized" according to Brehm, and so the primary behavioral consequence of reactance is almost never investigated. Instead, changes in the rated attractiveness of options tend to be the principal dependent variable, and positive effects have been shown in a wide variety of settings.

Most research in this area is firmly embedded in the tradition of laboratory experimental social psychology, and from that embedding, several consequences flow. First, in spite of the internal and subjective nature of behavioral freedoms, subjects' perceptions and beliefs about the experimental situation are rarely primary data: the experimenter's intention for the various manipulations are the criteria for whether behavioral freedoms have been established and then threatened or eliminated. Second, as noted above, check marks on a scale of attractiveness are the primary dependent variables—events quite far removed from re-establishing behavioral options. It can be argued that simply "wanting" something more is a rather pitiful substitute for "doing" something about getting it back.

As an example of the extent to which the laboratory constraint of method dictates the kinds of evidence examined, I cite a study by Worchel (1972, 1974) quoted extensively by Wicklund (1974) and also by Brehm and Brehm (1981). The purpose of the study was to compare the extent to which aggression was instigated under conditions of simple frustration, violation of expectancy, and arousal of reactance. Our interest here is in the reactance condition.

Subjects were told by the experimenter that they could choose among several rewards or payments for carrying out some perceptual motor tasks. They were also told that the assistant who would conduct the tasks was there on a trial basis, and the subjects would be asked to rate the performance of the assistant after the study was completed. They were told that these ratings would contribute to the decision as to whether the assistant would be hired or not. After the tasks had been performed, the assistant made assignments of rewards previously assessed by the subjects as differentially attractive (an hour's experimental credit, five dollars, or a bottle of cologne). This assignment of reward violated what the experimenter had told the subjects about their freedom to choose. Aggression or hostility was shown in negative ratings of the assistant as a function of the degree of violation of the subjects' free choice expectations. I use the alternatives hostility or aggression here, since hostility (as a feeling state) and aggression (as instrumental action) are clearly distinguished in the theory. However, in the four reports of this study, the data are twice called aggression scores (Worchel, 1972, 1974) and the same data are twice presented as hostility scores (Brehm and Brehm, 1981; Wicklund, 1974).

In this multiply reported study, it is also reported that a certain number of

subjects had to be eliminated from the final data analyses, but one must go back to the original Ph.D. Dissertation to find out why:

. . . five subjects were suspicious . . . one subject failed to return to fill out the assistant rating . . . two subjects refused to take the incentive offered by the assistant . . . and one subject had been told of the experimental manipulations beforehand. (Worchel, 1972, pp. 29-30)

We are not told what the five subjects were suspicious of, but surely their suspicions were a significant part of their belief system with regard to what was going on in the experiment—significant enough to eliminate them from the analyses. Recall that the entire phenomenon of behavioral freedom is said to be internally and subjectively determined, and these suspicions may be very important. Of perhaps greater importance are the three who did not follow instructions—the one who did not return to fill out the questionnaire after the assistant had violated his expectations, and the two who refused to be manipulated by the assistant's arbitrary assignment of an incentive. These subjects, according to theory, exhibited the greatest degree of reactance and the most definitive response: they re-asserted their behavioral freedom by refusing to participate further in the study. But they were eliminated from the analyses.

Another way in which natural opportunities to observe the mobilization of behavior toward the re-establishment of lost or threatened options was subverted proceeds as follows: The experimenter explained that he would not likely be available when the subject returned to fill out the assistant evaluation questionnaire because of overlapping schedules. In fact, according to Worchel (1972) "a general reason for this procedure, which was not explained to the subject, was to prohibit the subject's complaining to the experimenter about the incentive he had received before the evaluation form was completed" (p. 36). An inferential measure of reactance, through a questionnaire measure of aggression, was preferred to the more direct measure of protest, which might have been more difficult to quantify. Finally, after the assistant evaluation questionnaire (and another questionnaire) had been filled out, the experimenter ". . . began carefully exploring any suspicions or hypotheses the subject had developed about the experiment . . ." (Worchel, 1972, p. 40), but we learn nothing about what they thought. "Finally, the subject was given a choice as to whether he wanted one hour experimental credit or five dollars for participating in the experiment. A bottle of cologne was not offered because it could be obtained easily and the cost was much less than five dollars" (Worchel, 1972, p. 40).

What has been studiously ignored here? As noted above, the possibility of complaining and attempting to get the choice one was promised was, in fact, prohibited. Data on what people did if they had the opportunity to complain would be central to the notion of reactance. Second, there is no report of any

of the findings resulting from the "careful exploration" of suspicions and hypotheses that subjects may have generated. We know only, as reported, that five were suspicious in an undifferentiated way. This was apparently worth attending to, and taken seriously enough to reject these subjects; but data from this inquiry do not show up in the results of the study. Finally, subjects were offered either the five dollars or the experimental credit, and we are given no indication of the extent to which subjects asked for, or demanded, what they had preferred previously or what they had been promised.

I describe this study in such detail in order to point out the extent to which methodological commitments and hypothesis testing can subvert the very intention of a research program. The phenomena with which we begin can become distorted out of all recognition and the testing of particular hypotheses can blind researchers to the core phenomena which might be revealed if they would but attend openly to the data. In this case, some of the potentially strongest data concerning reactance and the motivation to restore lost or threatened freedoms are simply not reported, are explicitly excluded, or are ignored.

This study serves as an example of a theory situated firmly in experiential terms which are then bypassed and the potential phenomenology of the situation is discarded in favor of the classical independent variable-dependent variable format. But that is not all, for the results of reactance studies very frequently lend themselves to alternative interpretations, and the alternative interpretations tend to be speculations about what the *phenomenology might have been*: In attempting to interpret the results of various studies, Brehm (1966) frequently alludes to such hypothetical phenomenologies:

. . . it seemed possible that for some reason there was . . . a tendency . . . to see . . .  
(p. 30)

The child presumably thought . . . (p. 48)

The subjects may have thought . . . (p. 49)

There is the additional possibility that the subject thought . . . (p. 57)

Similar quotes can be drawn from many other sources in the reactance literature.

It appears that confirmed hypotheses are seen as the result of the experimenters' manipulations and the phenomenologies are never important enough to study directly. On the other hand, troublesome results are dealt with as the consequence of aberrant phenomenologies which are important enough to provoke speculation. Experimenters can speculate about them, but cannot ask the subjects about them.

In this entire realm of research I find a considerable catalog of both methodological and conceptual confusions, ranging from the avoidance of the

principal consequences of reactance—the direct restoration of behavioral freedoms—to the explanation of positive results by reference to independent variables and the explanation of negative results by reference to phenomenology, to transformations of hostility into aggression, and vice-versa, to the fundamental problem of describing reactance as an experience which is frequently unconscious or denied.

So the phenomenological potential of this approach has been abandoned to the methodology of laboratory social psychology, and I fear that this natural science approach has not moved us very far ahead in the study of human freedom.

### *Attribution Theory*

Another large literature in psychology concerned with freedom is the attribution literature (Harvey, 1976; Steiner, 1970). The attribution of freedom to actors by observers or to themselves is important, in that acts seen to be taken freely lead to attributions of dispositions, while acts which are seen to be coerced or not free do not lead to the attribution of dispositions. In a sense, the studies of the attribution of freedom are merely in the service of the study of attribution of other dispositions, but they do shed light on the conditions under which people perceive themselves and others to be free.

Here I have to become somewhat niggling and distinguish carefully between *perceiving oneself to be free* and *feeling free*. This distinction is not maintained in the attribution literature, in spite of the fact that anyone reflecting on his or her own experience can cite circumstances under which he or she was free by definition, but did not feel free—or the reverse.

For economy of time and space, I think it is fair to simply summarize this literature rather briefly. It seems that observers perceive actors as free when their behavior is at odds with what the observers consider ordinary determinants of behavior. For example, if person A walks up to person B and asks the time of day, and person B is seen to have a functioning wristwatch, person B is perceived as more free if he refuses to provide the time of day than if he complies with the request. The ordinary expectation is that B would meet A's request, and when he does not do so, observers see this as a free choice, rather than a coerced convention. In addition, observers believe this tells them something negative about B's generosity or congeniality or civility, as a disposition, while compliance with the request tells them nothing about these things.

Observers perceive actors as more free when they are making choices or decisions among alternatives which are nearly equal in both desirability and availability, especially when the desirability is fairly high. In these situations, it is argued, the choice or decision is not coerced by differences between the alternatives, and the decision is a free decision made by the individual.



When an individual takes a course of action which appears to be personally costly as compared to a course of action which is more personally beneficial, the choice is seen to be more free, and tells observers more about the individual making the choice than does a choice which is clearly in the self-interest. It is also true that when an action is taken which is injurious to another, as the injury becomes greater, the actor is seen to have greater freedom, as well as greater responsibility for his or her actions; in contrast, an actor doing this under the instructions of an experimenter perceives his or her actions as being less free and as having less responsibility as the injury becomes greater (Gurwitz and Panciera, 1975).

This line of research has evolved into the study of perceived choice and control (cf. Perlmutter and Monty, 1979) and the typical dependent variables studied are the extent to which an individual reports feeling that he or she had choice as a function of the number of alternatives, the attractiveness of alternatives, and so on. I again use the term dependent variable because this research is also well within the tradition of the natural science model of laboratory experimental social psychology, and the findings actually move further and further away from the heart of the phenomena the investigations were meant to illuminate.

But it is also worthwhile to note that Steiner (1979) suggests that experimental social psychologists have been excessively reliant upon their own projections with respect to whether they actually create the desired or presumed psychological conditions by their manipulations. He refers to the fairly common "manipulation checks" in which subjects are interrogated after an experiment to determine if they understood the experiment the same way the experimenter did. He also describes "throwaway subjects" who are interrogated immediately after, or even during manipulation, and then not included in the data. But he says

... I would go further and propose that we ought somehow to legitimize and dignify research in which all dependent variables are abstracted from subjects' responses to inquiries concerning their feelings of control and choice. Perhaps that seems outrageously phenomenological, but subjects' experiences are what determine whether our manipulations are doing what we want them to do. (pp. 20-21)

He goes on, then, to report three kinds of choice as described both by individuals choosing, and by the circumstances of the alternatives.

A "good" choice is one where the best alternative is highly attractive to the chooser, and the quality of the other alternatives is not very important. A "discriminative" choice is more directly related to the magnitude of the difference between alternatives, and not to the quality of the best alternative. An "autonomous" choice is one where a great array of qualitative differences distinguish the alternatives, and the final choice is idiosyncratic, that is, related to the individual rather than to clear and unambiguous superiority of

one alternative over the others.

In a subsequent paper, Steiner (1980) reiterates this theme in a somewhat more subdued form, but does go on to describe possible phenomenologies of decision-making, and reports much more diversified ways of manipulating events to generate these diverse phenomenologies. However, the data reported remain entirely of the "dependent variable" sort: "How much choice did you have to refuse . . .?" "How free did you feel to select the alternative . . .?" While the phenomenological state of S is of interest, it is tapped in an extremely narrow way, and discursive explorations of the full-blooded phenomenology of choice remains beyond the scope of this form of research. While greater attention to the mental state of the experimental participant is paid in the theorizing and in the design of the manipulations, the data of importance can only be said to be ". . . consonant with . . ." the theorizing, and a direct inquiry which might actually show that the theorizing is *correct or incorrect* remains an unfulfilled hope. As Steiner suggested in the earlier (1979) paper, perhaps it is ". . . outrageously phenomenological . . ." to say so, but the mental states which are hypothesized to intervene between the manipulations and the stated "feeling of choice" are not merely abstractions or mathematical relations: They are real events, and while they cannot be observed publicly, they certainly can be reported upon. It is precisely such reports by the theorist which lead to the development of the theory. Is the theorist's phenomenology to be taken seriously, but not the subject's? Surely we can do better than that!

Indeed, we *have* done better than that, for Martin (1922), in a detailed study of types of voluntary choice, devotes fully half of his 110-page monograph to direct phenomenological reports of the experience of choice. Ultimately he, too, reports several kinds of choices, but focuses on the experience of choice rather than on the characteristics of the alternatives. There is "preferential" choice, where the individual is deeply and personally involved, really actively chooses, is confident of the choice, even enthusiastic, and may act later to justify the choice (p. 39). There is "conflict" choice which is quite different: the individual vacillates repeatedly in making it, and after a choice is made, the chooser may remain uncertain and the alternative not chosen remains in consciousness (p. 46). There is "indifferent" choice, in which the chooser is quite uninvolved, there is a lack of feeling, and it simply must be done for external reasons (p. 50). Finally, there is "judgmental" choice, which is cool and dispassionate, having little to do with preferences or commitments, and also lacking in feeling. It would seem that any set of alternatives might give rise to any of the varieties of choice which Martin describes, depending on the peculiarities of the individual doing the choosing. Steiner does not attend to the peculiarities of the person; only to the peculiarities of the alternatives.

Let us now turn to human science models of the investigation of human freedom. In this next section I have three examples to describe, which can be

arranged in a hierarchy of richness and detail on the one hand, and an inverse hierarchy of rigour and generalizability on the other hand.

### Human Science Psychological Approaches

#### *Systematic Autobiographical Phenomenology*

I will begin with what is essentially an autobiographical account of a man learning about the nature of his freedom as he examines his daily experience and his reactions to it. This account, under the title *School of the Soldier* is by Ross Parmenter (1980), and it is systematic in the sense that it traces his own experience and understanding from the time of his induction into the Army until his discharge. It is a rich source of phenomenological reporting, and while I cannot do full justice to it, I will try to capture some of the spirit with a few quotations.

These quotations should be set in the context of the author's background, which he reports to have been unusually free by all conventional standards in North America—adequate financial resources, good education, a career he liked, access to the resources of a large city, and so on. He was not inducted into the Army until he was 30 years old, and he goes on to say:

My reception center was Fort Dix, New Jersey, and I am sure I shall always remember my days there as among the happiest of my life. They bordered almost on exaltation. It was because I felt so free. After ten years of concentrated and incessant thought, the menial tasks and the manual labor freed me from the burdens of 'mental strife' . . . . The good humored gregariousness freed me from much of the loneliness that is the inevitable price a man must pay for solitude. I was freed from even the most elementary decisions as to what to wear or to eat. (p. 25)

I was also freed from two of man's greatest millstones—the past and the future: from the past because the break was so complete, and from the future because it was so entirely unknown. I no longer had any projects to be completed or any status to be maintained. (p. 26)

The feelings of being so completely free, and living, as it were, suspended in time, had what was for me a totally unexpected psychological effect. I was astonished by two things . . . the sudden clarity of my mind and the calmness of my spirit. (p. 26)

But by observing the extent to which his life became dominated by the need to maintain warmth, to fight the accumulation of wintertime dirt, he says:

In those first days, then, I learned my first important truth—that freedom is largely material. I learned that a man was a slave to his need to keep alive. (pp. 28-29)

And Parmenter subsequently learned, on the other hand, through the comparison of the frugal, ordered, and spartan life of a military inductee to that of a monk, that

. . . monasticism had the same psychological effects when it was prescribed for the military victory of the United States as when it was prescribed for the worship of God. Not both the same thing, I might add. (p. 29)

With this discovery, I had another important truth to lay alongside my first one—namely that the greatest freedom is essentially spiritual . . . that it positively flourished with the removal of material things. (p. 29)

But as he moved to basic training, he identified a series of distinguishing oppressive elements. A constant sense of rushing; an unrelenting succession of the unexpected; a loss of identity; a reduction in social status; and a pervading barrenness of his surroundings. And arching over all of this, looms what he calls the Will of the Army, over which there is no control, and against which there is no recourse. He says, "I realized I had come up against something relatively new to me—the tyranny of external events" (p. 41), but he also learned the use of an inner life as a means to freedom. For Parmenter, this meant recourse to prayer and poetry.

In his technical training as a medical technician, he came to realize how freedom is based on health, and that sickness is enslaving—a reprise of the theme noted earlier, that one is a slave to the needs for survival. But beyond this, Parmenter became convinced that men want to be bound by that which they love: ". . . it is the sense of freedom rather than real freedom that they want . . . for all the liberties they don't care about, this desire to have the sense of freedom in their personal lives is . . . burning" (p. 135).

While Parmenter's account is rigorous in the detail of his reporting and the thoughtfulness of his observations, and systematic in that he follows himself through a lived series of important experiences, Zavalloni (1962) provided a different kind of systematic approach. What I will report here is embedded as but one chapter in a more elaborate treatment of the general issues of freedom and self-determination.

### *Systematic Collected Reports*

Zavalloni asked a large number of students, both directly and through other educators ". . . to describe by means of a concrete example an experience which entailed the use of their freedom or its restriction" (p. 162). Ultimately he received 173 usable responses from persons of both sexes ranging from 11 to 20 years of age, from various educational situations, home backgrounds, in three different languages. He reported these responses in some detail in rather loose categories, and I have attempted to impose more systematic ordering of the kinds of experiences represented in the reports. Needless to say, my categorizations are influenced by the categories I developed prior to reading Zavalloni's work.

Experiences which give rise to reports of freedom—either being free or feeling free—include the following:

- (1) Situations in which the individual is in contact with nature—both placid, as on a mountain top, and vigorous, as in being buffeted by wind or wave;
- (2) Absence of parental surveillance, as when parents are away or one goes out without a chaperone;
- (3) Some reports include a growing awareness of social balance and responsibility, as freedom experienced precisely when one voluntarily restricts one's own freedom, in order that the freedom of others may be guaranteed;
- (4) Doing gladly what one ought—freedom experienced through altruistic acts carried out gladly;
- (5) When making a personal decision about one's future—many respondents spoke directly about decisions concerning a career or further education;
- (6) Experiences of being independent and meeting a challenge successfully—this feature of independence and challenge can be in a decision situation, a moral dilemma, a physical challenge, an interpersonal one;
- (7) The final achievement of a goal which involves specific self-expression, as in ultimately learning to fly an airplane;
- (8) The more primitive freedom experienced when one can finally go outside after a long illness;
- (9) The simple freedom of engaging in a novel experience, such as going to an unfamiliar city;
- (10) The clear recognition that one is free when becoming aware of the opposite side of freedom—responsibility and conflict.

These ten categories capture at least some of the essence of the kinds of situations which give rise to reports of feeling free or recognition that one is free, at least for the respondents to Zavalloni's question. Some responses fall outside these categories, of course, and some experiences that have been included in each category differ very much from each other. Zavalloni does not provide much context for the responses—merely age and sex (sometimes) and the language in which the report was written. Zavalloni states that the findings do not lend themselves to any statistical treatment, but one of his respondents submitted a survey rather than a personal report: A 19 year old girl surveyed a youth group of which she was a member, and reported that a feeling of complete freedom had been experienced by 20% of the girls while alone or in contact with nature, 20% during vacation or leisure time, 20% when not under any control or chaperonage, and 12% after they had overcome some obstacle or performed a good act. We are not told the number surveyed, nor whether the above percentages are independent, but they certainly reflect some of the categories mentioned previously (p. 174).

The point to be taken is that a systematic survey is possible, and that some statistical treatment is also possible, and that one can inquire directly into the conditions which give rise to one feeling free or to one recognizing that one is free. I continue to use these two phrases because they are not equivalent, although they are often used by Zavalloni as if they were.

The third line of human science inquiry is my own research, which is the most conventionally systematic of these three, and loses some, but by no means all, of the phenomenological richness.

### *Systematic Survey Research*

From my reading and a series of interviews concerning the conditions under which people feel free (Westcott, 1978), I derived a set of seven kinds of situations which tapped at least some of the possible conditions for the experience of freedom (cf. Westcott, 1981, 1982a). My categories, independently derived, show considerable similarity to the situations which Zavalloni's respondents provided.

The seven kinds of concrete situations I derived included: (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. I developed four specific examples of each of these seven types, and cast them into a 28-item questionnaire. Each situation was presented in a first-person form (e.g., "All day long I have had a nagging headache, and I have just realized that it is gone"; "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"; "At times I engage in activities with skill and confidence in my ability to perform well"). Respondents were asked to imagine themselves in each situation and to indicate on a five point scale from "very much" to "not at all" how free "I feel."

This questionnaire format made possible a degree of quantification not present in the two previous approaches, but, of course, sacrificed some of the richness of the full open-ended account. However, respondents were also asked if the situation described gives rise to feeling *opposite* to free, and if so, they were asked to supply the most appropriate term to describe their own opposite feeling and indicate the extent of such feeling on a parallel 5-point scale. The information derived on feelings opposite to free provide for a dialectical analysis of what feeling free means in contrast to feeling something else; I will come back to this below.

Since these data are described in detail elsewhere (Westcott, 1982a) I will present only main findings. Respondents report feeling free maximally in situations where they are released from noxious stimulation and in situations where they are engaged in skilled behavior. They report the next highest degrees of feeling free in situations where they are directing their own behavior and when they have no responsibility. Situations where there are simply alternatives available but not exploited come next, and finally, the feeblest contributors to feeling free are situations where aspirations are brought into line with possibilities, and where active decisions are being made. The differ-

ences among the different situations are very large and statistically significant.

Some of these confirm philosophical prescriptions or agree with other psychological literatures, while other findings do not. That is, philosophical prescriptions for being free, psychological conditions where people are perceived to be free, and self reports of feeling free are by no means the same thing. Certainly the greatest agreement in the findings is among the three phenomenologically-oriented literatures: my own work, the work of Zavaloni, and the work of Parmenter. They do not overlap perfectly since the studies were all conducted independently, and the differences of methodology have already been described.

For my own research samples, the extent of feeling "opposite to free" in each type of situation shows an almost perfect negative correlation with the scores for feeling free. While this makes sense, we should note that this statement is true for the *group*. It is possible to take any *individual* and correlate the "feeling free" and "feeling opposite" scores across all situations and produce an intra-individual correlation between the two for each respondent. This exercise yields a distribution of correlation coefficients which range from a perfect  $-1.00$  through zero-order correlations to a high of  $+0.69$ . This means that for different individuals the relation between feeling free and feeling some opposite is very different. Some respondents typically feel free or an opposite exclusively; some respondents show a random relationship between feeling free and feeling an opposite; some respondents ordinarily feel free in conjunction with opposite feelings.

The qualitative analysis of the specific opposites supplied show that freedom is experienced differently in the different kinds of situations. The opposites supplied by the respondents yielded over two hundred different words, but the words could be coded reliably into 7 different content categories. These categories were: (1) diffuse unpleasant affect; (2) diffuse pressure; (3) prevention from without; (4) prevention from within; (5) coercion from without; (6) coercion from within; (7) conflict and indecision.

The task then was to determine the frequency with which each category of opposite appeared in each type of situation, and to compare the different situations for opposite usage. The analysis is not particularly complex, but it is burdensome to work through, and since it has been reported in detail elsewhere (Westcott, 1982a) I will merely summarize the results: Different patterns of opposites do appear in the different kinds of situations, although there is a general dominance of opposites relating to prevention from without and to diffuse unpleasant affect. Beyond these, the different kinds of opposites appear in different patterns in the different situations. All of the results are very strongly replicated on a second sample.

Thus, it appears that human science approaches to the study of human freedom can provide us with information that would never be revealed through natural science approaches. Human science approaches can vary in

the ways in which they are systematic and rigorous, and I believe I have shown in my own approach that an effort toward quantification need not rob such study of the rich, qualitative dialectical material. The quantitative analysis of the relationship between feeling free and feeling opposite to free, as well as the quantitative analysis of the specific opposites supplied, enrich, rather than diminish the qualitative understanding. I should add here that when, in a given situation, respondents are asked how free they "are," they provide answers which are different from when they are asked how free they "feel." The conceptual distinction I have tried to maintain is borne out in the data (Westcott, 1982b, 1983).

These findings are in the process of further enrichment, through interviews with secondary school students and with retired persons, and through systematic study of children. Throughout, the focus is on the experience of freedom as lived by real people in the real world. Human freedom may finally be getting the kind of attention it deserves from psychology.

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