

PREFACE

Two broad conceptions of human nature have featured in philosophic thought since ancient times. The first and oldest conception, determinism, argues that human beings are pawns of fate who behave in ways beyond their own control. This view is illustrated in the ancient Greek legend of Oedipus, who despite his own efforts unwittingly lived out the prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother. The second conception of human nature, called voluntarism or the doctrine of free will, argues that human beings are the masters of their own fate and have the freedom and responsibility to choose between alternative actions and beliefs. Both conceptions have influenced psychological thought over the centuries, but with the advent of modern science, determinism has prevailed over voluntarism, finding strong expression in the assumption that behaviour is lawful and can be predicted by studying cause and effect relationships.

In the mid 1950s, Gordon Allport focused psychologists' attention on these two very different views of human nature by describing what he termed the Lockean and the Leibnitzian tradition in psychological theorising. For Locke the human mind was a *tabula rasa* at birth, a blank slate on which sensations and associations traced a lasting and formative pattern. Leibnitz held that the intellect was active in its

own right and able to shape incoming sensory data according to its own inherent nature. For Locke the human organism was reactive; for Leibnitz it was spontaneously alive and self-propelled. Allport (1955) contrasted traditions within psychology corresponding to these two viewpoints.

On the one hand there was Lockean empiricism which was positivistic and mechanistic in outlook, emphasising experimentation and measurement of observable, molecular units of behaviour. It was dominant in Anglo-American psychology at the time Allport wrote, in stimulus-response psychology, in behaviourism, in animal psychology, and in the search for mathematical models. It was evident too in the biological determinism of the Freudian school. The Lockean tradition found its most extreme expression in Skinner's (1971) treatise, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*.

On the other hand, the Leibnitzian view emphasised the proactive and purposive qualities of the individual, maintaining that the person was a unique source of acts rather than a locus of reactions. This viewpoint, more common in European thought, found expression in the Gestalt school of psychology, in the work of phenomenologists such as Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Scheler, Gurwitsch, and Spiegelberg, and in the writings of Jung, Adler, Goldstein, Angyal, and others, and more recently in the writings of those espousing the humanistic-existential point of view. In America today, the premise that there is a self-determining tendency in human behaviour finds its most extreme expression in the human potential

movement, Est, founded by Werner Erhard, which teaches that the individual person is totally responsible for everything he or she is and everything he or she does (see Bry, 1976).

Allport's own theoretical contribution was in the Leibnitzian tradition. He viewed individuals as having a creative urge to style a life of their own. While not denying the impact of biological drives and the powerful and often lasting effects of early childhood learning, he argued that the person was something more than the product of these influences:

becoming is the process by which all these forces are employed by the creative urge to program a style of life for oneself. The basic existentialist urge to grow, pursue meaning, seek unity is also a "given". It is a major fact - even more prominent in man's nature than his propensity to yield to surrounding pressures. It is this desire for autonomy, for individuation, for selfhood, for existential uniqueness that enters into the shaping of the product. (Allport, 1963, p. 563)

An important influence on Anglo-American thought around the time of the publication of Allport's (1955) book, *Becoming*, was European existentialism. Existentialism focuses on the existence of the single, unique individual. As May (1958) pointed out, the term "existence" comes from the Latin *existere*, meaning to stand out, to emerge. Existentialism portrays the human person not as a collection of static mechanisms or patterns, but an emerging, a becoming. Existence means encountering the givens of the here and now and grasping the possibilities inherent for oneself. It means freedom and responsibility. Not to grasp the possibilities means non-being, nothingness, anxiety, death.

Various influences from within the Leibnitzian tradition, namely American versions of existential psychology, the writings of the post-Freudians, and the work of personalistic psychologists such as Allport, gave rise to a mood of protest against the limited and limiting view of the person implicit in behaviourism and orthodox psychoanalysis. In 1961 an independent journal, the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, appeared

concerned with the publication of theoretical and applied research, original contributions, papers, articles, and studies in values, autonomy, being, self, love, creativity, identity, growth, psychological health, organism, self-actualization, basic need-gratification, and related concepts. (*Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1, No. 1, p. iv)

In the following year the American Association for Humanistic Psychology was begun under the leadership of Maslow, Allport, Fromm, Goldstein, Bühler, Bugental, May, Murray, Riesman, Rogers, and many others. The major interests of the association were described as follows:

1. A centering of attention on the experiencing *person*, and thus a focus on experience as the primary phenomenon in the study of man. Both theoretical explanations and overt behaviour are considered secondary to experience itself and to its meaning to the person.
2. An emphasis on such distinctively human qualities as choice, creativity, valuation, and self-realization, as opposed to thinking about human beings in mechanistic and reductionistic terms.
3. An allegiance to meaningfulness in the selection of problems for study and of research procedures, and an opposition to a primary emphasis on objectivity at the expense of significance.

4. An ultimate concern with the valuing of the dignity and worth of man and an interest in the development of the potential inherent in every person. Central in this view is the person as he discovers his own being and relates to other persons and to social groups. (Brochure of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, quoted in Matson, 1973, p.8)

Eight years later, in 1970, humanistic psychology was officially recognized as a division of the American Psychological Society.

In focusing on autonomy this thesis belongs within the Leibnitzian tradition. In particular, the philosophic stance adopted is humanistic and existential. It is humanistic in that it proceeds toward the research problem in each of the four ways detailed above. It is existential in that it is concerned with the human beings as they encounter the possibilities of freedom and responsibility. It rests on the fundamental assumption that human beings possess a measure of freedom despite innumerable determining factors and that autonomy is the experience and expression of that freedom.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal Autonomy: A Contemporary Concern

In recent years psychological research has advanced our understanding of the interdependence between human reactions and environmental influences. Personal responses such as helplessness in the face of uncontrollable events (Seligman, 1975) or compliance in the presence of authority (Milgram, 1974) have come to be better understood through carefully conducted experimentation.

These and other studies have in turn raised questions about personal control over the environment. For example, Milgram (1974) asked, How does one preserve autonomy in the face of socially organized evil? Seligman (1975) asked, How can a sense of control and mastery be instilled in young children rather than a belief in their own helplessness?

Interest in personal autonomy is found also in applied areas of psychology. In counselling and psychotherapy it is frequently stated that a goal of therapy is to increase the autonomy of the client (e.g., Hazell, 1976; Goulding and Goulding, 1978; Bugental, 1971;

Gruen, 1967; Williams and Sodersten, 1981). In family therapy, a relatively new trend in counselling, one of the dimensions of healthy family life is said to be a general movement toward personal autonomy for each of the family members (e.g., Lewis, Gossett and Phillips, 1971; Peper, Kushel, Wadell and Hughes, 1980). And in contemporary feminist literature autonomy for women is seen as a central issue (e.g., Jongeward and Scott, 1976; Flax, 1978; Sheehy, 1977; Dowling, 1982).

In focusing on autonomy, then, this thesis is part of a contemporary concern apparent in both experimental and applied areas. The approach taken here, however, will be humanistic and existential, as described in the Preface.

1.2 A Rich and Diverse Literature

Given the contemporary positivistic emphasis in psychology, there is an unexpectedly rich and diverse literature related to autonomy. References to autonomy appear in many different branches of the discipline. Conceptions of autonomy can be found in theories of child and adolescent development, in the literature of counselling psychology, and in the writings of psychotherapists. It is seen sometimes as a need or drive, sometimes as a stage of development, sometimes as an acquired ability related to competence, sometimes as an experiential process related to will and decision, and sometimes as

a mode of social adaptation essential to becoming a fully functioning human being.

Overall, there is no generally agreed upon meaning of the term. Authors using it imbue it with their own special meaning (see Chapter 2), or, on the other hand, assume that the meaning is well understood. To date there seems to have been no systematic study of the concept.

1.3 Verbal Correlates of "Autonomy"

The term "autonomy" is derived from two Greek words *auto* meaning "self" and *nomos* meaning "law". Literally, autonomy means the having or making of one's own laws. The Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning "liberty to follow one's will, personal freedom". Chaplin (1975) defines autonomy as "the freedom of the human individual to choose, to be a self-governing entity" (p. 50).

Autonomy is an abstraction and the verbal counterparts in the literature are complex and often metaphorical: for example, to assert one's own nature, to steer one's own course, to stand on one's own feet, to stand one's ground, to be oneself, to be active in one's own behalf, to resist coercion and restriction, to struggle against imposed conditions, to follow one's conscience, to retain some independence from the physical and social environment, to choose conformity or non-conformity, to affirm one's separateness and integrity, to be able to make one's own decisions and take

responsibility for them, to have a sense of self-efficacy, to be a "self-starter", to have some power over the course of one's life.

There is no obvious verb in the English language to convey the essence of these various action phrases. "To become" was the verb used by Allport (1955). It means to grow, to find autonomy, individuality, and selfhood. Yet it does not capture anything of the effort of will and decision implied in many of the phrases listed above. As used by Allport, "to become" implies progressive growth in a direction governed by one's biological nature, that if conditions are favourable one will grow and mature in unique ways. On the other hand, phrases such as "to resist coercion and restriction", "to stand one's ground", or "to struggle against imposed conditions" suggest a different picture of life in the world, namely that favourable conditions are perhaps something of a myth, and that for most people life is rather more a constant confrontation with the givens of individual existence.

"To self-actualize" was Maslow's (1967, 1968, 1971) term. He used it to mean to achieve autonomy along with spontaneity, self-acceptance and a heightened involvement in life. This term, like Allport's, has come to have the connotation of positive, forward growth, although, in fact, Maslow's theory of personal growth includes conflict and choice.

There is another verb, not widely used, which is derived from the noun "self". It is the verb "to selve", meaning to express one's inwardness, one's individuality, to affirm one's presence in the world. It was coined by the poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves - goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*
(Poem 34, Gardner, 1955)

Hopkins also used the past-participle, "selved", and the gerund, "selving", in his notebooks. He referred to human nature as "more highly pitched, selved and distinctive than anything else in the world." (Hopkins, 1955, p.145) He continued: "Nothing else in nature comes near this unspeakable stress of pitch, distinctiveness, and selving, this selfbeing of my own." (p.146)

As Hopkins used it, the verb, to selve, referred to self-expression and self-affirmation as a natural property of all animate and inanimate objects. He did not use it to refer to the efforts of will and decision that human beings can also produce. But it could be used in this way. It is a simple verb which does not have the disadvantage of being linked to the human potential movement (with its optimistic view of positive, forward human growth), as do the terms "to become" and "to self-actualize".

This discussion has shown that in the English language at least, there is no commonly accepted way of describing the actions and experience of an individual asserting and expressing his or her autonomy. We usually describe autonomy in metaphorical language.

1.4 Overlapping Concepts

A study of the literature also reveals that writers with a humanistic orientation use terms such as growth, self-actualization, individuation, and selfhood interchangeably with autonomy. In fact many such terms and phrases exist, including "the creative power of the individual" (Adler, 1932), "individuation" (Jung, 1940), "positive freedom" (Fromm, 1942, 1949), "autonomous self-determination" (Bühler, 1964), "centered responsibility for one's own life", "subjective sovereignty" (Bugental, 1971, 1978), "self-support" (Perls, 1969, 1977), and "proaction" (Bonner, 1965). Maslow (1971) argued that these overlapping concepts were a necessary phase in the development of "growth" psychology:

For the writers in these various groups, notably Fromm, Horney, Jung, C. Bühler, Angyal, Rogers, G. Allport, and recently some Catholic psychologists, growth, individuation, autonomy, self-actualization, self-development, productiveness, self-realization, are all crudely synonymous, designating a vaguely perceived area rather than a sharply defined concept. In my opinion, it is *not* possible to define the area sharply at the present time. Nor is this desirable either, since a definition which does not emerge easily and naturally from well-known facts is apt to be inhibiting and distorting rather than helpful, since it is quite likely to be wrong or mistaken if made by an act of the will on *a priori* grounds. (p. 232)

1.5 The Research Question

Thus three considerations emerged in the early stages of the

investigation and suggested the direction the research should take. First, there was a rich and diverse literature which seemed to be tapping an important dimension of human experience but with little communication among authors. Second, there was a lack of simple verbal forms to express the meaning of autonomy suggesting that it was a complex concept. Third, there was much overlap between the term "autonomy" and various other terms relating to personal growth and self-actualization. These three factors raised the following questions: How is autonomy *experienced* in individual lives? What are the felt processes, or feeling states, or cognitions? How can the experience of autonomy be conceptualized? It seemed important that these fundamental questions be explored as a research activity in itself - an activity *prior* to any hypothetico-deductive approach to the topic. Consequently, the decision was made to pursue exploratory research to seek an answer to the question: *How is autonomy experienced and how can that experience be conceptualized?*

1.6 A Phenomenological Inquiry

In selecting a research method to answer this question the following requirements were taken into account: one, the method should respect the autonomy of the participants and not negate the concept it was attempting to study; two, the method should explore the experience of the participants rather than their observed behaviour; and three, the method should not pre-empt the inquiry by employing an operational

definition of autonomy. For these various reasons the phenomenological method was chosen as the most appropriate approach.

In an attempt to clarify the difference between phenomenological research and experimental research in personality and social psychology, Table 1.1 compares the phenomenological approach with the hypothetico-deductive approach (Popper, 1979). Differences between goals, purposes, assumptions, methods of analysis, and the nature and presentation of results are drawn. This comparison is attempted here because for many psychologists phenomenological inquiry is new.

Table 1.1

**A Comparison of the Phenomenological Approach and the
Hypothetico-Deductive Approach as Applied to Psychological Research**

	HYPOTHETICO-DEDUCTIVE APPROACH	PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH
MODE OF KNOWLEDGE:	Rational, empirical	Metaphoric, rational and empirical (i.e multiple modes)
GOAL OF RESEARCH:	The explanation, prediction and control of behaviour	The description and understanding of the phenomena of experience
FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS:	1. Objectivity on the part of the researcher 2. Variables can be manipulated and controlled 3. Generalizations are drawn from the study of many cases	1. The researcher necessarily is involved in the construction of the data 2. Phenomena are studied in their natural manifestations 3. The general truth resides in the particular

METHOD:	A systematic procedure for testing hypotheses derived from a theory. Steps can be specified in advance	The procedure varies with the problem. Steps cannot be specified in advance but are reported along with the findings
SOURCE OF DATA:	Samples of the target population	Exemplary instances of the phenomenon
DATA COLLECTION:	Standardized procedures and measuring instruments are used	As far as possible the phenomenon is approached without preconceived theories or measures
DATA ANALYSIS:	Statistical methods are usually employed	An intellectual activity on the part of the researcher
RESULTS:	A conclusion	An interpretation
COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS:	Language used is formal and usually statistical	Symbolic forms of communication may be used (e.g. stories and schematic representations)
RELIABILITY:	The procedures are public and reproducible	The part played by the researcher is reported, but is not reproducible
VALIDITY:	The result is testable empirically	The result is verifiable experientially and intersubjectively

The phenomenological approach will be further elaborated in Chapter 2. One item from Table 1.1, however, will be discussed here, namely, the idea of the metaphoric mode of knowledge.

Royce (1973), in reviewing the epistemologies underlying contemporary theoretical psychology, distinguished three basic paths to knowledge;

empiricism, rationalism, and metaphorism. The cognitive processes associated with these three ways of knowing differ: empiricism is founded on *sensing and perceiving*, rationalism depends on *thinking* and metaphorism depends on *symbolizing and intuiting*. The criteria for knowing associated with these three modes differ: empiricism depends on accurate perception, rationalism depends on logical consistency, and metaphorism depends on the degree to which symbolic and intuitive cognitions lead to universal rather than idiosyncratic insights. According to Royce, all three ways of knowing are essential to a full and adequate grasp of the world, but metaphoric ways of knowing are the least understood. One important key to metaphoric knowledge is the use of the symbol rather than the sign. Symbols convey meaning in a less precise way than signs.

Table 1.1 indicates that a phenomenological approach may employ multiple modes of knowing. This was suggested by Polkinghorne (1980). Phenomenological research in psychology is in its early stages. Some approaches borrow from the rational methods of the phenomenological philosophers (for example the method of individual phenomenological reflection of Colaizzi, 1973). Some keep closer to empirical methodology (for example, Van Kaam, 1966; Stevick, 1971; Schur, 1978). Others employ the metaphoric mode (for example, Moustakas 1961; 1967).

In the research that follows the approach taken includes intuitive ways of thinking and knowing, and symbolic ways of communicating the findings (themes and personal accounts). The main test for the

validity of the findings, as Royce suggested, will be the degree to which the research produces something better than idiosyncratic insights.

1.7 Overview of the Study

In the chapters that follow, an account is given of the path I followed in seeking to understand how autonomy is experienced in everyday life, and how that experience might be conceptualized.¹

Chapter 2 elaborates the method used in the study. There were two stages in the method. First, data based on first-person experience were gathered using in-depth interviews with people willing to talk about the experience of autonomy in their lives. During this stage I endeavoured to hold in abeyance preconceived theories and definitions and to listen to participants with a receptive attitude, facilitating their flow of thoughts and ideas. The second stage of the research involved the task of making sense of the data and developing a way of conveying and communicating the notion of autonomy. In this stage insights and ideas from the psychological literature on autonomy played an important part. In a sense, they comprised further data for my reflections. Thus the review of the literature follows the chapter

¹In later chapters, particularly when reporting the steps of the method in Chapter 2, I found that to refer to myself frequently as "the researcher" was too clumsy. Thus the usual practice of third-person reporting in psychological research had to be abandoned.

on method rather than precedes it, which is the more customary practice.²

Chapter 3, the review of the literature, examines many different understandings of autonomy. The various conceptions are organized under five headings, namely "motivational", "developmental", "cognitive-behavioural", "interpersonal", and "experiential", as a convenient first step in attempting to grasp the nature of the concept in its varying contexts and senses. Certain other concepts which refer to self-determination and overlap in meaning with autonomy are also presented. The assumption is made that insights revealed within these various approaches are relevant to the task of the thesis, which is to develop a description of autonomy from the viewpoint of the experiencing person.

In Chapters 4 and 5 such a description is attempted using five "themes" which were derived from the study of the interview data and the literature. The themes distinguished some interrelated aspects of the experience of autonomy. They are as follows:

1. a concern with self-development and personal goals,
2. the capacity for independent decision-making,
3. the capacity to act assertively,
4. the capacity to persist toward personal goals, and
5. an attitude of self-acceptance and self-affirmation.

²In the hypothetico-deductive method the literature review points up and clarifies the theory from which research hypothesis is derived.

Taken together these themes comprise an interpretation of the experience of autonomy in its most positive form.

In Chapter 4 these themes are introduced. Their meaning is illustrated by reference to appropriate examples from the interviews and their links with the literature are described. Then, using the insights derived from these accounts and from certain other accounts in the literature, three aspects of the sense of self are distinguished - a sense of being, a sense of identity, and a sense of autonomy. The sense of autonomy is described as the sense of self expressed in action. The terms "selving" and "to selve" are suggested as useful ways of conceptualizing this experience.

In Chapter 5 the themes are further illustrated using the accounts of eight woman participants, considered in turn to preserve the context of each woman's life-situation. The final chapter, Chapter 6, examines the achievements and limitations of the research and suggests possible areas for further study.

Chapter 2

DEVELOPING A METHOD

The previous chapter highlighted the need for an exploratory study of the nature of autonomy and showed how the phenomenological method was chosen as a method suited to the purpose. This chapter begins by outlining the philosophical basis of phenomenology. Next, the characteristics of phenomenological method are described and its development as a method in psychology is briefly traced. Then the way in which the method is applied in the present study is described. There were two stages in the research: first, the gathering of first-person accounts related to the experience of autonomy, and second, the search for a conceptualization of autonomy based on insights gleaned from the experiential data and insights gleaned from the literature.

2.1 Phenomenology as a Philosophical Movement

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement founded by Edmund Husserl and further developed by Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, Marcel, Merleau-Ponty, and many others. As a movement it is closely linked to

the existential movement. Phenomenology holds that persons and the world in which they live co-constitute one another. They give meaning to each other. The world exists for a person only via the meanings he or she gives to it, and conversely, the meaning of a human existence is given by the world (Valle and King, 1978). Heidegger's (1962) word for existence was *Dasein*, which is translated as 'being-in-the-world': *sein* to be, *da* there, meaning to be 'the there', or to be present in the world, here and now in the world as a necessary part of being. For Heidegger, being and world were a unity, or as Van Kaam (1966, p. 7) put it, "I am inconceivable without my human world".

In Heidegger's philosophy the rift between subject and object is healed. To quote Barrett (1962),

Heidegger destroys the Cartesian picture at one blow: what characterizes man essentially, he says, is that he is Being-in-the-world... Existence itself, according to Heidegger, means to stand outside oneself, to be beyond oneself. My Being is not something that takes place inside my skin (or inside an immaterial substance inside that skin); my Being, rather, is spread over a field or region which is the world of its care and concern. (p. 217)

Heidegger conceived of Being (*Dasein*) as a field. Human beings '*ex-sist*' or 'stand out' and are projected into possibilities in the world. This means that existence is not understood by a turning inward to one's own inner life but by a grasping of one's everyday possibilities in lived situations.

The philosophical position of phenomenology is here described in Heidegger's terms. Husserl's thought preceded and influenced Heidegger. Husserl transcended the subject-object split by his

formula *ego-cogito-cogitatum* by which he sought to demonstrate that the knower and the known are inseparable. Every experiencing (*noesis*) has a direction toward that which is experienced (*noema*) and conversely every experienced phenomenon reflects a mode of experiencing. Consciousness is always consciousness of something. Remembering, imagining, perceiving, hoping, loving, always relate to an object and to every object there is a corresponding mode of experiencing which constitutes it. Husserl termed this correlation "intentionality". Consciousness in Husserl's philosophy is not an "interiority", a space or property within the person, but a bridge with the world, an intentionality. Van Kaam (1966) captured the essence of both Husserl's and Heidegger's formulations by describing consciousness as "a being together with the world, an encounter with, an orientation to, a directedness, an intentionality" (p. 8).

Thus the phenomenological approach adopts a position where person and world derive meaning each from the other; what is known cannot be separated from the meaning given to it by individuals. To the phenomenologist knowledge begins with first-person experience. A second important feature of phenomenology is that being-in-the-world (*Dasein*) is never positional or static, but is a *project-in-the-world* (Valle and King, 1978), a reaching out in imagination to possibilities. It is a being-toward or a becoming.

2.2 Phenomenology as Method

Phenomenology as a method of inquiry is characterized by a disciplined

attitude on the part of the researcher who endeavours to hold in abeyance habitual and biased ways of looking and thinking in order to attend to the phenomenon in its fullness. The researcher adopts what Macleod (1947) called "an attitude of disciplined naiveté" or what Koestenbaum (1978) called "presuppositionlessness". While the ordinary viewer sees things in "the sedimented context of ordinary belief" (Ihde, 1977, p. 107), phenomenological researchers try to put aside preconceptions and biases. Presuppositionlessness is a goal to strive for, something that can be approached but never achieved since it is not possible to attend to anything without some preconceptions. The name given to this process of suspending biases, theories, beliefs, and habitual ways of thinking is the *epoche* (a Greek word meaning abstention). It is also referred to as the phenomenological reduction.³

Another characteristic of the phenomenological method is that phenomena are studied in their everyday manifestations - as they appear and where they appear. This means that consciousness (i.e., being-in-the-world) is studied directly without recourse to experiment or standardised instruments. The direction taken is, in Husserl's phrase, "to the things themselves".

³The "first result" of the phenomenological reduction is the suspension of belief in the Cartesian image of the person. Experience is seen as a mind-body continuity, as described above in Section 2.1).

A paradox arises here. In order to conduct an inquiry we must know something about what it is we are looking for. On the other hand if we define the phenomenon in advance we pre-empt our inquiry into its nature. Ihde (1977) put it this way:

The paradox consists in the fact that without some - at least general - idea of what and how one is to look at a thing, how can anything be seen? Yet, if what is to be seen is to be seen without prejudice or preconception, how can it be circumscribed by definition? (p. 31)

The solution is to take a direction of inquiry which allows for interplay between the phenomenon and the notion we have of it. Ihde called this a "dialectic of interpretation" (p. 31).

A third characteristic of the phenomenological method is that it is limited in scope to exploration, description, and understanding. It does not try to answer causal questions:

The phenomenological question is simply, 'What is there?', without regard to Why, Whence or Wherefore. (MacLeod, 1947, p. 19)

The task is to make explicit what is already there, taking care not to ignore, change, or distort what is given.

Keen (1975) listed four steps in the phenomenological method as applied in psychology: *phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, interpretation, and communication*. Phenomenological reduction, or the *epoche* has been described above. Imaginative variation consists of imagining the phenomenon against various backdrops or "horizons of meaning" in an attempt to discover the structural or invariant features. Interpretation is the act of understanding the phenomenon in relation to the horizons. There is

always more than one possible interpretation. Communication refers to the process of finding ways to make the interpretation comprehensible to others. The procedures that have led to that interpretation must also be communicated.

The concept of "horizons of meaning" needs some elaboration. A horizon is a backdrop of meaning in terms of which an individual's action and experience can be interpreted. Keen listed temporal, spatial, sociocultural, interpersonal, bodily, and ideational horizons as backdrops common to all individuals. The specific character of each of these backdrops at any given moment is unique to the individual, but the structural character of horizons in different types of experience is researchable.

For example, Keen suggested that experiences of shame, or feeling ashamed, have a common *interpersonal* structure: there is always a real or imagined other in whose eyes we feel judged. Or, Keen considered that in the experience of not changing one's mind when tempted to do so there is a common *temporal* structure to be discovered, namely, some combination of past, present and future perceptions in the form of memories, anticipations, anticipated memories (how one would feel in the future looking back), remembered anticipations (how one previously looked forward to the present possibility), and the lived experience of the present moment.

2.3 Applications of Phenomenological Method in Psychology

The application of the phenomenological method in psychology is a relatively new area of study. Those who have contributed to the growth of this method include the Swiss psychiatrist, Binswanger, with case studies of his patients (Binswanger, 1958, 1963; Brice, 1978); the Dutch physiologist and phenomenologist, Buytendijk, with research on women, posture, motion, pain, and touch (Buytendijk, 1950; Misiak and Sexton, 1978); and the French philosopher, Merleau-Ponty, who studied perception and various aspects of bodily being - body in space, body image, gestures, and speech (Merleau-Ponty, 1967; Kwant, 1967; Spurling, 1977; Misiak and Sexton, 1973).

In North America four factors have influenced the development of present day phenomenological psychology: the immigration of European psychologists during the period of the Nazi persecution, the work of Americans who have studied in Europe, translations of European writings, and the development of a "home-grown" phenomenological orientation (see Misiak and Sexton, 1973). Included in this latter "home-grown" group are Snygg and Combs (1949), Rogers (1964), and Kelly (1955)⁴.

Some North American applications of the phenomenological method have stayed close to the scientific research model, even striving for

⁴As pointed out by Brewster Smith (1950), Snygg and Combs, Rogers, and others used the term "phenomenology" to refer to *the subjective frame of reference* rather than to a philosophical method which involves suspension of belief in the duality of mind and body.

detachment on the part of the researcher and using a large data base (e.g., Van Kaam's (1966) study of "feeling understood"), while in other studies the researcher has been very much a participant researcher (e.g., the research on loneliness of Sadler, 1978, and Moustakas, 1961).

One group of researchers, under the leadership of Amedeo Giorgi (a former student of Van Kaam), have developed a systematic method which has been applied in a variety of contexts (see von Eckartsberg, 1971; Giorgi, Fischer and Murray, 1975; Giorgi, Knowles, and Smith, 1979). Using data from interviews or written protocols these researchers have developed a method of qualitative content analysis designed to elicit the "fundamental structure" of a phenomenon. Briefly, each transcript is studied as a whole and then broken up into units of meaning which relate to the phenomenon under study. The researcher then reflects on these units of meaning and compiles for each participant a structural description of the phenomenon. These accounts are then synthesized by the researcher and the commonality running through them is elaborated. This constitutes the fundamental structure of the phenomenon.

Phenomena which have been studied using this method include anger, disappointment, anxiety, suspicion, and "being criminally victimized". An example of a structural description developed using this method is Fischer's (1978) description of anxiety. His description begins:

An anxious situation is one in which a particular problematic possibility of an individual's project to become an adequate, worthy human being announces itself and solicits him to responsibly confront it; more specifically, an anxious situation is one in which an individual is called to thematically and explicitly discover that who he is, what he realizes or fails to

realize, and how he comports himself really matter. Further, who he is, would be, as well as would not be, are without guarantees or unquestionable justifications. To a considerable extent, they depend for their realization upon the individual's effortful commitment and enactment. (p. 179)

Other good examples of structural definitions using this method are Stevick's (1971) description of anger and Schur's (1978) description of "being disappointed".

Two difficulties have been reported with Giorgi's method. First, it does not work as well when the experience being studied is broad and general in nature. For example, better results (i.e., fundamental structures) are obtained when different *types* of learning are studied (e.g., motor learning, cognitive learning) than when learning as a general phenomenon is studied (Giorgi *et al.*, 1979). Second, as von Eckartsberg (1978) pointed out, the method culminates in descriptive statements which do not mean very much unless they can be related step-by-step to the experiences from which they originate. In other words, the accounts of the participants are important to an understanding of the final summarizing statements of the research. Because of these limitations, and especially since autonomy is a broad and general concept, Giorgi's method was not adopted in the present research.

2.4 The Present Study

The research began with a pilot interview to test whether an unstructured interview method could provide data about the experience

of autonomy and to find out what problems might be encountered.

2.4.1 Pilot study

I interviewed a primary school teacher, Simon,⁵ previously unknown to me. A brief statement of his educational aims had been published in a local newspaper, along with those of some other teachers at the school in order to publicise a forthcoming educational forum at the school. His aims included the following statement:

In my class I want each child to develop autonomy, self-sufficiency and self-discipline; as well as an awareness of himself and others.

I approached Simon and asked him would he consent to be interviewed as part of a pilot study on the concept of autonomy and its significance in individual lives. He readily agreed, and chose his own home as the venue for the interview.

The interview was unstructured and took the form of a "cooperative dialogue" (von Eckartsberg, 1971). This kind of approach in which the participant is viewed as "expert and colleague" has also been suggested by Mischel (1977) and Jourard (1967). Simon spoke freely about his attitudes and values, and about events in his childhood which had taught him to think independently. The conversation was recorded on cassette tape and later transcribed.

The study of the transcript highlighted two issues:

1. Intellectual data versus experiential data. I found that Simon

⁵His name has been changed to preserve anonymity.

spent quite a large proportion of the interview talking *about* autonomy in an intellectual way. At the same time it was clear that he had strong feelings about his own need for autonomy. I decided that in future interviews as far as possible I would try to guide the interview so that participants talked concretely and in a personal way, about their current feelings as well as their ideas.

2. Interviewer bias. It happened that Simon's early upbringing in his family contrasted markedly with my own in so far as freedom of religious belief was concerned. Simon described how his father had encouraged him to think and decide for himself on religious issues. One particular incident stood out in his memory. When he was in fifth class at a Roman Catholic School he had been caned by one of the Brothers for refusing to believe in certain aspects of the Catechism. But his father supported his stand and gave him the freedom of choice to change to another school if he wished. Simon decided to leave. In talking around this idea of exercising freedom of choice, the following exchange took place (I stands for myself as interviewer, S stands for Simon):

I: It's good for me to talk to you because from my background, anyway, within my family, I had to struggle for those very things, particularly in the area of religious freedom. You did it at school - I had to do it at home and it took me a long, long time. So it's really good to be talking to you. It's broadening my perspective in that sense. You started out with some of these things almost in your bones, or picking them up through currents in your family, you know, that you were getting from your father.

S: I think so, mainly Dad. Yet I found all the institutions I was in were very hard and I've always found it hard. I find the Department of Education very, very hard for that reason. It's so inflexible and it's so rigid and always I'm beating my brains against it, or my head, so it seems.

I: So in a sense you've had to struggle for what you value.

S: Oh I think so. Yes.

I: In your sense, you're struggling for those particular values in a way. Whereas somebody else might be struggling for something else and that in a way might be their autonomous striving.

S: Oh yes, yes. I suppose what I am trying to do is to allow enough flexibility for me to express my real nature, and my real nature I suppose is a very challenging sort of one.

In studying this transcript I became aware that I had used the words "struggle" or "struggling" four times in a brief space of time. It was a concept that I had introduced, not Simon. It clarified for me that my initial bias was to think about autonomy as a struggle for independence. I became more aware that Gruen's (1976) definition of autonomy as the capacity to struggle against opposed conditions (see Chapter 3) held a particular appeal for me.

I decided that in future interviews I would adopt, as far as possible, a listening role, using skills which I had developed in my work as a counsellor and therapist to keep participants talking and to facilitate the elaboration of *their* thoughts and ideas. To listen in this way would be in keeping with the phenomenological attitude of holding in abeyance my own preconceived notions. I would try not to introduce content of my own. While this would not eliminate bias because I would still be guiding the interview, it would reduce bias. This method of nondirective interviewing is described by Selltiz, Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook (1965).

2.4.2 The participants

In selecting participants the most important criterion was that they would be willing and able to talk in depth with me about their everyday lives. I needed their trust and confidence in me as an interviewer so that they would talk freely about their feelings as well as their ideas.

For these reasons I found women through personal contact who were of a similar age and background to myself. Eight women aged between 30 and 42 years participated. They were average people in the sense that they were following the social patterns dictated for women in their community. And they were women who seemed to be coping well with life - I did not want the interviews to become therapy sessions. Six were married, one was divorced and living with a partner, and another was divorced and living as a single mother. All but one of the women had children. They were articulate women, of above average intelligence. This group in no sense comprised a "sample" (see Table 1.1). Their contribution was to provide exemplary instances of the phenomenon of autonomy, assumed to exist to some degree in all people.

2.4.3 The setting

Because I wanted the participants to be relaxed and at ease during the interview I allowed them to choose the venue, either their home, their place of work, my home, or my office. In all cases the arrangement made worked well, and rapport was established quickly. The interviews were recorded on cassette tape and after the initial warm-up period the cassette recorder seemed to have no noticeable inhibiting effect,

except when one side of the tape filled and it had to be turned over. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, but one participant felt there was more that she wanted to talk about and she returned for a second session.

2.4.4 Interviewing techniques

The focus in the interview was on listening. My aim was to say just enough to keep the participant's thoughts flowing and developing. The use of silence was important. If I refrained from speaking and simply showed interest in a non-verbal way the participant would usually add further to what she had said, or modify what she had said, or try to say it in a different way. Dufrenne (1968) described the creative process of putting thoughts into words as follows:

What is it that I want to say exactly? I am not sure of what I am thinking until I have said it, and I am not sure of what I have said unless I confront my utterance with what I am thinking: my wording puts my thinking to the test; and my thinking puts my wording to the test. (p. 85)

It was this process of formulating and reformulating thoughts and feelings that I wanted to facilitate. Other techniques used to achieve this purpose included my paraphrasing or summarizing the participant's comments in a non-judgmental way, asking open-ended questions, and asking questions aimed at specificity and concreteness (see Egan, 1975; Perls, 1969).

To begin the interview I adopted an informal approach, indicating in a general way the topic of the inquiry. The actual wording of the introduction varied on each occasion as I did not use notes, but in general it went as follows:

I'm interested in the concept of autonomy and I'm trying to understand what that means in the lives of the women that I'm talking to. So I'm interested in finding out whether you feel you have a sense of autonomy - if that's important to you. Whether you have a sense of self-direction, or perhaps whether you lack that, and what you're up against. So in that general area, I'm just really interested in finding out what your feelings and attitudes are. (Quoted from the transcript of the fourth interview.)

In this introduction I used the term "self-direction". In the literature "self-direction" and "self-determination" are common synonyms for autonomy. I chose to use the former as it seemed the simpler concept.

The intention of this general introduction was to have participants respond in some initial way from their own experience. I wanted them to set the direction for the interview, not me. In every case this goal was achieved, although two of the interviews started out rather slowly. Two of the women began by talking about their career interests, two spoke of the importance of independence to them, and four focused on aspects of choice and decision-making.

One week after the first two interviews, participants were given a copy of the transcript, and after reading it in their own time, they prepared a short, written statement about the meaning of autonomy in their experience. The third participant did not want to read the transcript although she said she had enjoyed the interview. By this time I was not able to keep pace in transcribing the interviews so no further transcripts were given to participants. The eighth participant, however, prepared and sent to me after the interview a

written summary without my suggesting it. So there were three written summaries that formed part of the data.

2.4.5 Analyzing the interview data

One common practice in analyzing interview data in psychology is to use the method of content analysis. This is a method of quantifying data which summarizes and measures the common elements in the data. Berelson (1952) described content analysis as a method of careful counting and listed seven conditions under which the method was justified. The first three of these conditions are listed below to indicate the unsuitability of the method to the present investigation:

1. Count carefully when a high degree of precision and accuracy is required in the results,
2. Count carefully when a high degree of objectivity is required in the results, and
3. Count carefully when the materials to be analyzed are representative enough to justify the effort.

The logic of the present study, as described in this chapter and in Table 1.1, called for a different approach to data analysis.

In this respect the application of phenomenological method in education and sociology proved helpful. For example, Duignan (1981) in writing about ethnography as interpretive research described the method as "an intellectual activity on the part of the researcher" (p. 285). Davies (1982), in reporting an interpretive study of the perceptions of primary school children, described the research act as "reflexive" (p. 21). Reflexivity referred to the interplay between

her insights gleaned from conversations with children and her insights from academic theory and research.

In the present study the analysis of the data involved an intellectual activity on my part in which insights from the interviews were tested against insights from the literature. This to-and-fro activity between the data and the literature comprised the second stage of the research act and was just as central to the whole project as the gathering of the interview data. It was for this reason that eight interviews were considered a sufficient number of exemplary instances.

The search for a coherent interpretation could be described as a spiral procedure which started with a broad ambit and gradually progressed toward a more concise formulation. As a result certain themes evident in both the interviews and the literature are brought together and highlighted in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. While other interpretations are possible, these themes are presented as the product of systematic study and reflection and as worthy of being tested against the results of further phenomenological research and against the reader's own experience.

Before the themes are presented, however, what the literature of psychology has to say about the experience of autonomy must be described. This is the task of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE NATURE OF AUTONOMY:

Insights from the Literature

The challenge of this thesis is to find a way of conceptualizing autonomy from the perspective of the experiencing person. Ideas and insights are drawn from two main sources, the accounts of the women who participated in the study, and the conceptions of autonomy that are to be found in the literature of psychology. In many of these conceptions autonomy is explained as an abstraction - a need, a trend, a stage in development, an acquired interpersonal ability, a mode of social adaptation, and so on. But these various theories also contain descriptive elements that contribute to an understanding of autonomy viewed from the perspective of the experiencing person.

In an attempt to uncover these elements, the various meanings given to the term, autonomy, in the literature are examined in this chapter. Five major emphases in defining autonomy can be distinguished, namely, motivational, developmental, interpersonal, cognitive-behavioural, and experiential. Different conceptions of autonomy are reviewed under these five headings and definitions are collated in tabular form. Some definitions fit under more than one heading, but they are listed according to their major emphasis for the purpose of study and

comparison. This is a wide-ranging approach. It is a first step in trying to grasp the nature of the concept in its varying contexts and senses.

Certain other concepts that have to do with the idea of personhood and which are linked in meaning with autonomy are also defined. These include definitions of freedom, a term often used synonymously with autonomy. In general these terms refer to the awareness and exercise of choice and responsibility.

This chapter provides the groundwork for the following chapter in which themes for conceptualizing autonomy are proposed. The chapter concludes with a description of Koestenbaum's (1978) phenomenological theory of the person, which proved to be a useful source of ideas and insights in formulating the themes of Chapter 4.

3.1 The Motivational Aspect of Autonomy

Table 3.1 presents three definitions which describe autonomy as an inner impulse which can be expressed negatively as defiance and resistance or positively as self-expression and self-direction.

Table 3.1

Definitions of Autonomy Emphasizing the Motivational Aspect

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Murray (1938)	Autonomy as a psychogenic need.	The need to get free, to resist coercion and restriction; to avoid or quit activities prescribed by domineering authorities, to be independent and free to act according to impulse; to be unattached, irresponsible; to defy convention.
Angyal (1952, 1958, 1965)	The trend toward autonomy as part of the double orientation of self-determination and self-surrender to a whole greater than oneself.	Active and spontaneous assertion and expansion of one's own nature; self-determination, self-government, self-directed activity.
Gruen (1967, 1968; 1976)	Autonomy as the central integrating force in the development of personality.	The capacity to become active in one's own behalf; to struggle against imposed conditions; to strive for independence and individuality, i.e. for a self of one's own making.

Of these definitions emphasizing the motivational aspect of autonomy, Murray's is probably the best known. Murray (1938) saw autonomy as the need to resist power wielded by others. In its positive form it is the need for independence and the desire to speak one's mind. On the whole, however, Murray gives the concept a negative flavour. Autonomous behaviours listed by him include: to do as one pleases regardless of rules or conventions, to refuse to be tied down by family obligation or by a definite routine of work, to regard marriage as a form of bondage, to escape from prison, to swear and blaspheme,

to defy one's parents, and to be as obstinate and stubborn as a mule. According to Murray, autonomous behaviour is often accompanied by a feeling of anger.

By contrast Angyal's definition (Table 3.1) highlights positive self-assertion. Angyal linked autonomy with the qualities of spontaneity, curiosity, and eagerness to explore. Referring to autonomy as the self-determining tendency, he wrote:

Perhaps the clearest and most direct expression of the organism's tendency to impress its determination on a wide range of events is the drive to act, to make things happen for the mere joy of action and for the sake of experiencing oneself as the cause of changes. (Angyal, 1965, p. 9)

In Angyal's theory, life is a patterned process in which two trends can be discerned, one a trend toward autonomy or self-determination and the other a trend toward homonomy or self-surrender to a whole greater than oneself. In a healthy person there is a balance between these two trends. Autonomy can be seen in organismic, homeostatic self-regulation, in spontaneous, self-assertive behaviour, in conscious, self-directed, self-initiated behaviour, and in the drive for mastery.

The trend toward homonomy is an expression of the urge to belong. Individuals strive to become a part of something greater than themselves, be it the family, a social group, a nation, a cause, an ideology, nature, or God.

A disturbance in either of these two basic trends limits a person's development. In particular, a lack of autonomous striving leaves the person susceptible to environmental determination, "a straw in the wind, a piece of driftwood carried by currents, a creature of circumstance" (Angyal, 1965, p. 11), while an excess of autonomy leads to rebelliousness, intolerance of interference, and refusal to accept help from others. Thus what Murray referred to as autonomy, Angyal described as an excess of autonomy.

Gruen (1967, 1968, 1976) shared Angyal's view that autonomy is a central process in the pattern of human development. In fact, Gruen maintained that autonomy is an integrating force. According to Gruen, autonomy involves the capacity to become active in one's own behalf, to strive for independence and individuality, and to struggle against imposed conditions (see Table 3.1).

From studies of schizophrenic patients Gruen formed the view that autonomy could only be understood from the viewpoint of the experiencing person. What may, for example, seem to others like compliance and submission may in fact be "autonomy gone underground for the sake of invulnerability" (Gruen, 1976, p. 61). For example, where a patient has experienced a home environment as hostile and threatening and has been afraid to express himself or herself either positively or negatively, he or she may in fact be hiding defiance and independence behind a veneer of compliance. In such a case the paradox of the attempt to preserve an independent self *via*

non-assertiveness is that the self atrophies through lack of expression. In Gruen's view, autonomy has to be respected by others and allowed expression if it is to have a positive influence in development.

Perhaps what the conceptions of Murray, Angyal, and Gruen all have in common is that they refer to various expressions of the motivating sentiment, "I want to do (or be) what I myself want to do (or be)", a rudimentary form of wanting to take responsibility for oneself. Murray emphasized negative expressions of this sentiment (defiance and wilfulness), Angyal emphasized positive expressions, and Gruen described neurotic or pathological expressions.

3.2 The Developmental Aspect of Autonomy

Of the authors listed in Table 3.2 some refer to autonomy as a stage in development, others simply link the concept of autonomy with a particular phase of development.

Table 3.2

Definitions of Autonomy Emphasizing the Developmental Aspect

AUTHORS	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Piaget (1932,1967)	Autonomy as the final stage in the development of moral feelings.	An inner sense of good conduct associated with mutual respect for others, social cooperation, shared power, and a sense of justice.
Kohlberg (1969,1973)	Autonomy as a final stage of moral development.	Principled moral thought; orientation to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency; orientation to conscience as a directing agent and to mutual respect and trust.
Erikson (1950,1967)	Autonomy versus shame and doubt: an ego strength exhibited throughout the lifespan, but emerging as a critical issue in early childhood.	The expression, both conscious and unconscious, of free choice, seen initially in behaviours such as holding on, letting go, and resisting coercion. Asserting oneself in one's own way including exercising self-restraint and making one's own decisions.
Bettelheim (1967,1969, 1980)	Autonomy as a crucial achievement in early childhood and an important quality throughout the lifespan.	The capacity to be self-directing, to act of one's own accord toward a goal of one's own choosing. Implies a strong sense of selfhood and a belief in one's own efficacy.
Goethals and Klos (1976)	Autonomy as a key concept in understanding adolescent behaviour.	(a) Psychoanalytic definition: Renouncing or loosening childhood ties to the parents; emotional independence and developing as a separate person in one's own right. (b) Interpersonal definition: Being oneself despite interpersonal anxiety, e.g. by disagreeing with significant others or by expressing anger toward them despite the risks involved.

Loevinger (1976,1978)	Autonomy as the pen-ultimate stage of ego development.	Comparative freedom from social pressure and from the oppressive demands of conscience; the capacity to acknowledge and cope with inner conflict, to tolerate ambiguity and complexity, to respect the autonomy of others yet acknowledge one's own need for interdependence.
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3.2.1 Moral autonomy

For Piaget (1937, 1967) and Kohlberg (1969, 1972) autonomy was the final stage of moral development. These authors defined autonomy in an evaluative way: to be autonomous one's thinking must employ standards, it must be of a certain quality.

This raises the question of what the standards of moral thinking are and who decides them (Barrow,1975). Gilligan (1982) argued that Kohlberg's stages reflect values ranked more highly by men than by women. She presented evidence to show that, in general, women at a high stage of moral development use different criteria from men when making moral decisions. Women, according to Gilligan, put a high value on maintaining relationships and on taking responsibility for the care of others, while men put a high value on individual rights.

There is some ambiguity in the use of the concept of autonomy as applied to moral behaviour. Is the experience of autonomy to be equated with the experience of choosing according to one's highest moral value, whatever that is, or is it to be equated with the

experience of choosing according to individual rights and responsibilities? In the first case, there would be little difference in that experience for men and women. In the second case, women would experience autonomy less frequently, since according to Gilligan, they put compassion and concern for others before individual rights.

The concern of this thesis, however, is to describe the structure of the experience of autonomy, not to ask questions about the moral nature, or frequency, of that experience.

3.2.2 Autonomy versus shame and doubt

Erikson's (1950, 1967) conception of autonomy stands out from others in that it describes a conflict or tension between autonomy and lack of autonomy which exists in some degree in all individuals throughout life. According to Erikson the critical period when this conflict first appears is in early childhood roughly between the ages of eighteen months and four years. He described this period as a crisis of autonomy versus shame and doubt. At this time the child is gaining control of the sphincter muscles, and of the musculature in general, and wants to exercise these newly learned powers in his or her own way - defiance, stubbornness, resistance, struggle, and protest are common. In this stage, a ratio of love and hate, cooperation and wilfulness, and self-expression versus self-suppression is established. With mutual regulation between caretaker and child a favourable degree of autonomy will result and the rudiments of self-control and willpower will develop. If however autonomy is prevented or punished rage will be aroused. This rage may be

suppressed and turned inward, in which case it finds expression in shame and doubt.

In Erikson's theory, autonomy changes in nature as the child matures. It is mainly in early childhood that it takes the form of defiant self-assertiveness. Later on, for example, when the child develops in initiative and industry, interest in a self-chosen task or in a new-found competence is an expression of autonomy. Thus it is only in the toddler stage that Erikson's conception of autonomy is similar to Murray's.

3.2.3 Autonomy as a belief in one's own efficacy

Bettelheim (1967, 1969, 1980) agreed with Erikson that early childhood is a critical period for the development of autonomy. But Bettelheim set the beginning of the critical period in the first year of life not the second. He stressed the importance of interpersonal exchanges between parent and child in that very first year, as well as the importance of toilet training activities in the second and third years.

According to Bettelheim the infant's active strivings and the way in which they are matched by responses from the environment are crucial factors in developing autonomy. The child learns to predict outcomes and to act on those predictions. The child gains the feeling, "What I do makes a difference" (Bettelheim, 1980, p. 339). Seligman (1975) put forward a similar view based on laboratory research on helplessness. Bettelheim, however, maintained that there is more

involved in the development of autonomy than simply the synchrony between self-initiated activity and environmental outcomes. There is the emotional exchange between parent and child:

To act on the environment is...not enough for developing a human personality. To it must be added the ability to communicate emotions and to experience an appropriate emotional reply. (Bettelheim, 1967, p. 25)

Equally important, in Bettelheim's view, are activities in the second and third year of life centering on the task of toilet training. Here the child learns a sense of self as agent: "it's me who did this, and nobody else" (Bettelheim, 1967, p. 297).

Bettelheim provided evidence to support his views from case studies of rehabilitated autistic children. In a residential therapeutic environment Bettelheim allowed autistic children to regress to primitive oral and anal behaviour in order to have them relinquish habits which had been forcibly imposed from without. Under these permissive conditions the children gradually began to develop a sense of their own bodies and of being *in charge* of their own bodies. Little by little this sense of self extended into other areas such as in the addition of the pronoun "I" to their limited vocabulary, in the recognition of others as separate "selves", and in their new-found capacity to initiate games and activities with others. Bettelheim (1967) summed up his view of the development of autonomy in autistic children in this way:

They came to life only when we were able to create the conditions, or otherwise be the catalysts, that induced them to take action in their own behalf. (p. 17)

In this review of conceptions of autonomy, Bettelheim is included under the "developmental" heading (Table 3.2), since he subscribed to the "critical period" point of view, but his work extends beyond this emphasis. He stressed the interpersonal and cognitive aspects maintaining that what children need to learn during the early years is the *belief* or *conviction* that they can influence people and events around them. He viewed autonomy as an important personality component throughout the lifespan, the factor making the difference between one who succumbs to extreme circumstances and one who survives (Bettelheim, 1960, 1980).

3.2.4 Autonomy and adolescence

Another phase in the life cycle where autonomy is said to be important is adolescence. Goethals and Klos (1976) delineated two theoretical approaches to the study of autonomy in adolescence, a psychoanalytic approach based on the work of Anna Freud, and an interpersonal approach based on the work of Henry Stack Sullivan. The first of these approaches emphasizes the breaking of childhood bonds with the parents. According to Goethals and Klos, as the adolescent begins to reject a dependent role, autonomy grows through reciprocal give-and-take between parent and adolescent. Mutual sensitivity and adaptation to each other's feelings foster autonomy. This corresponds with Bettelheim's emphasis on mutuality in childhood.

Goethals and Klos held that where parents show over-involvement in the adolescent's life and are unable to terminate old ways of relating, the adolescent may form a resentful attachment or an idealized

attachment to the parent. One outcome of a resentful attachment is a tendency to rebel. An outcome of an idealized attachment is a tendency to commit oneself to the parents' values rather than forming values of one's own on the basis of personal experience. The second approach described by Goethals and Klos (Table 3.2) emphasizes the importance for the adolescent of risking anxiety by venturing out in new ways. The first person accounts published by these authors illustrate these various aspects of autonomy in adolescence.

3.2.5 Autonomy and ego development

It could be argued that Loevinger (1976, 1978) has studied growth toward autonomy under the title "ego development". The term "ego development" appears to be crudely synonymous with other growth concepts such as individuation, becoming, self-realization, and self-development. Like Maslow (see Section 1.4), Loevinger (1976) did not want to define the concept on *a priori* grounds:

To give a formal definition of ego development would imply that the limits of the topic can be set arbitrarily, but that would belie the conception that ego development is something that occurs in the real world. (p. 14)

Loevinger provided substance to her concept of ego development by studying women's written responses on a sentence completion task. In the development of her theory she allowed a feedback loop between the data being obtained and the theory being developed, that is, the responses of her subjects helped modify the theoretical conceptions. Her research has resulted in the description and elaboration of a growth sequence in which the various stages can be seen as milestones

on a path toward autonomy and personal integration. The following stages are identified: autistic, symbiotic, impulsive, self-protective, conformist, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous, and integrated. The implication is that personality develops by acquiring successive freedoms. First of all freedom from impulses is achieved through the learning of social conventions. Later on, relative freedom from social conventions may be achieved. The autonomous stage and the integrated stage are rarely achieved, according to Loevinger. She claimed that ego development is a single coherent process of change affecting many different facets of behaviour,

What changes during the course of ego development is a complexly interwoven fabric of impulse, control, character, interpersonal relations, conscious preoccupations, and cognitive complexity, among other things. (Loevinger, 1976, p. 26)

The autonomous stage, the one most relevant to the present study, is characterized by the capacity to tolerate ambiguity and complexity, the ability to cope with conflicting inner needs, respect for the autonomy of others, recognition of the need for interdependence, awareness of how both physiological and psychological factors contribute to behaviour, appreciation of one's own social context, and a sense of self-fulfilment. All these qualities are also characteristics of the next stage, the integrated stage. Here is added a cherishing of one's own unique identity, a greater reconciliation of conflict, and a renunciation of the unattainable. Only rare individuals reach this integrated stage, according to Loevinger, and very few reach the autonomous stage.

3.3 The Interpersonal Aspect of Autonomy

For each of the authors included in Table 3.3, Murphy and Moriarty, Wertheim, and Foote and Cottrell, the concept of autonomy is linked with the concept of interpersonal competence.

Table 3.3

Definitions of Autonomy Emphasizing the Interpersonal Aspect

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Murphy (1962), Moriarty (1961)	Autonomy as an aspect of mastery and coping with life in early childhood.	A strong sense of self expressed in a child's active approach to the environment e.g. in readiness to express his or her own needs; to protest, terminate, reject, ignore or avoid unwanted intrusions, to set limits to pressures from the environment; and to mobilize energy to meet challenge or stress.
Wertheim (1973,1975)	Autonomy as a major element, along with competence, in the individual's give-and-take relationships with the world.	Age-,sex-, and culture-adequate control in significant interpersonal relationships.
Foote and Cottrell (1955)	Autonomy as an acquired ability and an essential component of the competent personality.	The ability to be oneself, to know oneself, and to govern oneself by choosing among alternative actions according to a stable set of internal standards; the ability to handle problematic interpersonal situations where self-esteem is threatened or challenged.

3.3.1 Autonomy as interpersonal coping behaviour

Murphy (1962) and Moriarty (1961) conducted a longitudinal study of the "paths toward mastery" of thirty-two pre-school children over a twelve year period, as they faced challenges, problems, and new situations.

In the view of these researchers autonomy is a dimension of interpersonal coping behaviour along which individual children differ. It can be seen in negative assertive behaviour such as ignoring or refusing adult's requests, as well as in positive assertive expressions of choice and intention. Ratings of autonomy were obtained from paediatric and psychiatric examinations, projective and psychometric tests, interviews with mothers, and observations of the children in various settings. Descriptive accounts of autonomy in individual pre-school children were compiled. For example:

The strong, autonomous attitude of Chester expressed itself in a variety of ways: in proud self-assertion, structuring a total situation in his own way, braving threats, maintaining controls which he imposed on himself, sustaining relationships as he liked and also terminating situations decisively, always maintaining a manner of proud self-control and self-assertion....

Ray watched the adults with a questioning, mischievous, half-defiant gaze that seemed to say "You can't make me do anything I don't want to. I'll decide when I am ready to decide." Sheila insisted on autonomy at all times as if to say, "I'll do it my own way," and Sally consistently stuck to her own view under challenge from adults.

Susan typically had strong ways of dealing with pressure in situations, mastering them without yielding, and Jo Anne's attitude was generally one of making herself at home, deciding where she would go and what she would do, just as Greg determined his own path and chose what he would pay attention to. (Murphy, 1962, p. 208)

In older children Murphy found autonomy less easy to observe, particularly in girls. She inferred that polite, conforming behaviour masked the spontaneity and independence evident at the pre-school stage.

3.3.2 Autonomy as interpersonal control

Wertheim (1973, 1975) carefully distinguished autonomy and competence by defining autonomy as age-, sex-, and culture-adequate control over significant interpersonal relationships, and competence as age-, sex-, and culture-adequate control over one's body and the physical environment. In Wertheim's view, life consists of an adaptive balance between "doing" and "undergoing" - between the power of the person and the power of the environment. Autonomy and competence are interdependent aspects of a person's "power" vis-a-vis the world. Autonomy is interpersonal power.

Wertheim held that autonomy develops according to a definite epigenetic pattern. Her elaboration of this developmental sequence was confined to the early years of life since it was here that research findings were available to her. She emphasized above all, as did Bettelheim and Erikson, the importance of the mutual interaction between infant and caretaker in the development of autonomy.

3.3.3 Autonomy as the ability to be oneself among others

Foote and Cottrell (1955) listed autonomy as one of the six components of the competent personality, the other components being intelligence, empathy, judgment, and creativity.

Autonomy, in the view of these authors, is the ability to be oneself. It involves the ability to govern oneself, that is, the ability to choose among alternative courses of action. It implies a clear self-concept, a stable set of internal standards which guide one's actions, confidence in and reliance upon oneself, self-respect, and the capacity for recognizing real threats to oneself, and for mobilizing realistic defences to meet those threats.

For this subtle complex of intra- and interpersonal factors, Foote and Cottrell suggested two simpler definitions, close to operational, in the hope that they might lead to research on autonomy. These were: i) ease in giving and receiving evaluations of self and others, and ii) ease in handling problematic interpersonal situations where self-esteem is threatened or challenged. They suggested many hypotheses concerning autonomy, for example, exposure to other highly autonomous persons who can serve as models for identification facilitates autonomy. However, no research was reported.

3.4 The Cognitive-Behavioural Aspect of Autonomy

Under this heading various conceptions of autonomy are included which emphasize choice behaviour based on independent attitudes and actions. Table 3.4 collates definitions referring to this cognitive-behavioural aspect. Of these theoretical treatments, Riesman's is the most comprehensive.

Table 3.4

Definitions of Autonomy Emphasizing the Cognitive-Behavioural Aspect

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Riesman (1950,1952)	Autonomy as a mode of social adaption- autonomy vis-a-vis tradition-direction, autonomy vis-a-vis inner-direction, autonomy vis-a-vis other-direction.	Choice in the extent and manner of one's conformity or non- conformity to prevailing social norms and traditions.
Jahoda (1958)	Autonomy as a criterion of positive mental health.	The individual's degree of independence from social influences, as in making decisions according to one's own internal standards.
Maslow (1955,1968, 1970,1971)	Autonomy as a characteristic of a psychologically healthy individual.	Relative independence of the physical and social environment, including relative independence of adverse external circumstances; self-decision, self-government; being an active responsible, self-disciplined, deciding agent; following one's own inner values.
May (1953,1969)	Autonomy, freedom, courage to be oneself.	The capacity to be free of automatic dependencies and actively to choose and affirm one's own values; the capacity to take a hand in one's own development by confronting anxiety and accepting risk.
Kaufmann (1973a,1973b)	Autonomy, as contrasted with "decidophobia" (fear and avoidance of fateful decisions).	Making, with courage and spirit, the decisions that give shape to one's life.

3.4.1 Autonomy as choice behaviour

In Riesman's (1950, 1952) view, autonomy has to do with the capacity of individuals to choose whether or not they conform to prevailing social and cultural pressures. Riesman defined autonomy as personal control over the extent and manner of one's social conformity.

His theory distinguished three modes of conformity corresponding to three kinds of social organization:

1. tradition-directed conformity which stems from obedience to traditions and customs,
2. inner-directed conformity which stems from internalized norms instilled by authority figures, and
3. other-directed conformity which stems from the capacity to tune in to other people and be responsive to their expectations.

He put forward the view that, broadly speaking, people can be classified into three character types corresponding to these three modes of social conformity. These he named the tradition-directed type, the inner-directed type, and the other-directed type. He cautioned that the three types were not discrete classifications; everyone is to some extent tradition-directed having been brought up in a particular society which moulds character from birth; everyone is to some extent inner-directed having been brought up by people with authority and older than oneself; and everyone is other-directed in that one is oriented to the expectations of peers and companions and to the demands of particular situations. Moreover, Riesman pointed out, a person's "type" is simply a tendency within an individual and

is not fixed for life. A person can change his or her predominant mode of conformity.

According to Riesman, no matter what type of social pressure prevails, three kinds of individual responses can also be distinguished. A person may be *adjusted*, *anomic*, or *autonomous*. To be adjusted is to follow the expected mode of conformity in that society and to become a typical member. To be anomic is to be out of harmony with the prevailing mode through misinterpretation or maladjustment. To be autonomous is to exercise personal choice regarding one's conformity or non-conformity to the prevailing social expectations. Thus in Riesman's view the autonomous person is capable of conforming but may choose not to, and is capable of non-conforming but, again, may choose not to. In Riesman's (1950) words:

The autonomous person differs from the anomic in that he can exercise some choice over the structuring of his experience; if he conforms it is not compulsively, and if he deviates it is not unknowingly. (p. 11)

By referring to these two modes, i) mode of conformity (tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed) and ii) mode of adaptation (anomic, adjusted, and autonomous), Riesman distinguished three types of autonomy: autonomy *vis-a-vis* tradition-direction, autonomy *vis-a-vis* inner-direction, and autonomy *vis-a-vis* other-direction. It is not correct to equate autonomy with inner-direction as some references to Riesman's work seem to imply (e.g., Winthrop, 1968). Riesman (1950) himself cautioned against this misinterpretation:

Metaphorically, one may think of [inner-directed] people as gyroscopically driven - the gyroscope being implanted by adults and serving to stabilize the young even in voyages occupationally, socially, or geographically far from the ancestral home. (p. 6)

the gyroscopic mechanism allows the inner-directed person to appear far more independent than he is: he is no less a conformist to others than the other-directed person, but the voices to which he listens are of an older generation, their cues internalized in his childhood. (pp. 8-9)

Thus for Riesman, autonomy is the exercise of personal choice in the face of social pressures to conform, regardless of whether those pressures originate from the weight of tradition and custom, from contemporary peer pressure, or from values and goals instilled and internalized in childhood. The challenge to the individual is to carve out his or her own identity and individuality in the face of these pressures to conform. The road toward autonomy is not an easy one to travel, but rather a constant struggle against the influence of the prevailing culture. It is a never-ending process of throwing off external and internal pressures to be a modal, or "adjusted" person. Autonomy, in Riesman's view, is an ideal to be striven for; it is never wholly attained.

3.4.2 Autonomy as independence of the physical and social environment

Like Riesman, Maslow (1955, 1968, 1970, 1971) stressed that autonomy meant independence from the social environment. He maintained that autonomous individuals have the capacity to adapt to social customs, to conform to them, to rebel against them, or to ignore them. They choose their attitude. They "write their own lines" and they resist

being manipulated. They have a strong sense of their own identity and individuality.

But unlike Riesman, Maslow included relative independence from the *physical environment* in his definition of autonomy (see Table 3.4). Under physical environment he included adverse external circumstances such as ill-fortune, hard knocks, tragedy, stress and deprivation. He stated that autonomous individuals are less likely to be overwhelmed by these adverse events - they possess a capacity for detachment and independence. In this regard, Maslow's stress on detachment contrasts with Gruen's emphasis on struggling against imposed conditions (see Table 3.1).

On his list of the characteristics of a psychologically healthy, self-actualizing person, Maslow (1955) rated autonomy as *the* defining characteristic. This helps explain his reference to growth and self-actualization as crudely synonymous with autonomy (see Section 1.4).

3.4.3 Autonomy as independent decision-making

Jahoda's (1958) brief review of several different conceptions of autonomy seems to be the only review of autonomy available in the literature, apart from brief footnotes. Jahoda concluded that autonomy has to do with independent decision-making and that various authors emphasize either i) the *nature* of the decision-making process, especially the inner regulation of behaviour, or ii) the *outcome* of the decision-making process, especially independent

actions. She defined autonomy to include both aspects (see Table 3.4) and listed autonomy as one of six criteria of positive mental health.

3.4.4 Autonomy as choice despite anxiety and risk

For May and Kaufmann, the remaining two authors listed in Table 3.4, autonomy has to do with making one's own decisions despite anxiety and risk. For May (1953, 1969), as for Riesman and Maslow, autonomy means to free oneself from automatic dependencies and to respond to social demands according to self-chosen values. Autonomy is a quality of the total self; it includes "the courage to be oneself".

Courage, according to May, is the capacity to meet anxiety as one steps out from the group and risks the dangers of isolation, ridicule, or rejection; it is the power to let go of the familiar and the secure. This emphasis on risk-taking is very similar to Goethal and Klos' interpersonal approach to autonomy (see Table 3.2) where the task for the adolescent of breaking the familiar patterns of childhood means facing anxiety and risk.

In May's view, autonomy also means "powers of will and decision". Where there is some possibility of choice between alternatives, "will" is the capacity to organize oneself so that movement toward the chosen goal may take place.

3.5 The Experiential Aspect of Autonomy

The final emphasis that can be distinguished in the literature is the experiential aspect of autonomy, which of course is the chief concern of this thesis. This aspect has already been touched on many times in this chapter, for example in references to the desire of individuals to do things in their own way; in references to the negative emotions of anger, shame, doubt, and resentment when self-expression is not permitted; and to feelings of self-efficacy and confidence in making decisions when self-expression is encouraged. There were references also to the feelings of anxiety and inner conflict that are associated with following one's own course in life rather than keeping to the expected pattern.

Table 3.5 lists three definitions which place a major emphasis on the experiential aspect. Rogers (1969, 1977) and Goulding and Goulding (1978) focused on the experience of choice and responsibility. Berne's (1976) emphasis was different. He described three experiential concomitants of autonomy, namely, clarity of perception, spontaneity, and the capacity for non-manipulative relationships. These therapists shared the view that autonomy can be increased through psychotherapy.

Table 3.5
Definitions of Autonomy Emphasizing the Experiential Aspect

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Rogers (1969, 1977)	Inner autonomy, responsible autonomy.	The experience of power and choice as residing in oneself; the exercise of that choice bearing the consequences of that choice; self-ownership, self-decision, self-control.
Goulding and Goulding (1978)	Autonomy, personal power, personal responsibility.	The capacity to free oneself of habitual attitudes and responses which arise from internalized parental injunctions; to find one's own power and put that power to use by making new decisions and taking responsibility for them.
Berne (1976)	Autonomy in human relationships.	Liberation from social, cultural and parental influences concerning how to behave, think, feel and perceive; the capacity for awareness, spontaneity, and intimacy.

To illustrate what he meant by inner autonomy, or the experience of power and choice as residing in oneself, Rogers (1969) gave the following example:

I think of a young man classed as schizophrenic with whom I had been working for a long time in a state hospital. He was a very inarticulate man, and during one hour he made a few remarks about individuals who had recently left the hospital; then he remained silent for almost forty minutes. When he got up to go, he mumbled almost under his breath, "If some of *them* can do it, maybe I can too". That was all - not a dramatic statement, not uttered with force and vigor, yet a statement of choice by this young man to work toward his own improvement and eventual release from the hospital. It is not too surprising that about eight months after that statement he was out of the hospital. I believe this experience of responsible choice is one of the deepest aspects of psychotherapy and one of the elements which most solidly underlies personality change. (pp. 265-266)

Recapturing autonomy through self-knowledge and self-change is a focus of many recent forms of psychotherapy. Maslow (1967) explained the process as follows:

finding out who one is, what he is, what he likes, what he doesn't like, what is good for him and what is bad, where he is going and what his mission is - opening oneself up to himself - means the exposure of psychopathology. It means identifying defenses, and after defenses have been identified, it means finding the courage to give them up. (p. 284)

In this regard, Goulding and Goulding (1978), Berne (1976), and Perls (1969, 1977) emphasized the importance of understanding the impact on oneself of childhood conditioning and the importance of deciding anew as an adult what one's mature choices and responses will be. This belief in a person's capacity for recapturing autonomy is summed up by R. Goulding:

I...believe that people make whatever decisions they have to make as children to survive psychologically and physically, and that they can remake a decision or make anew one at any time, and thus change the course of their lives...I believe the power is in the person, and that the therapist's job is to create an environment in which that person can make new decisions in his life, and get out of his script - to live autonomously, responding to the new environment in a way appropriate for this time and place. (p. 11)

For these authors clients must come to understand that increased autonomy is a possibility and they must act on this understanding by taking responsibility in directing the course of their own lives.

3.6 Other Related Concepts

As pointed out in Section 1.4 there is much overlap in the literature between autonomy as an experiential concept and various other terms and phrases relating to self-determination. Table 3.6 lists some of these terms. In particular, Bugental's (1971) phrase "centered responsibility for one's own life" sums up succinctly the experience of responsible choice guided by an inward sense of self. Elsewhere, Bugental (1978) explained what he meant by an inward sense,

The inward sense makes possible discriminations among potential experiences, selectivity of perception, continuity of enterprise, and ongoing guidance of one's own activities. It is not some mystical, extrasensory power; it is the totality of our awareness, functioning out of our being truly present in our own lives. (p. 122)

Table 3.6

Definitions of Concepts Closely Related to Autonomy

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Adler (1932)	The creative power of the individual.	An individual's capacity to set goals and make decisions in accordance with chosen purposes and values.
Jung (1940)	Individuation, selfhood, self-actualization.	The courage to affirm one's inborn distinctiveness as a human being; to choose one's own way by conscious moral decision.
Buhler (1964, 1967, 1971)	Autonomous, self-determination.	To view one's life as a whole and to live with purpose and intention by setting up life goals.
Progoff (1975)	The active power of self-reliance.	The inner capacity of the person to find meaning in life and to meet the trials of life in a self-reliant way.
Bugental (1971, 1978)	Centered responsibility for one's own life; subjective sovereignty.	To be the author not the victim of one's destiny; to be self-determining, self-governing; to make choices in terms of one's own unique needs and values.
Perls (1969, 1977)	Self-support	To take responsibility for one's own actions and one's own life.

This inward sense was referred to by Maslow (1967) as "listening to the impulse voices" (p. 282), by Rogers (1967) as the "organismic basis for valuing", and by May (1953) as "a willing which is... *with* the body, a willing from within; it is a willing of *participation* rather than *opposition*" (p. 240).

3.6.1 Freedom and responsibility

Another term often used synonymously with autonomy is freedom. Table 3.7 lists four definitions of freedom.

Table 3.7
Definitions of Freedom

AUTHOR	CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Fromm (1942,1949)	Positive freedom, "freedom to" as contrasted with "freedom from".	The courage to be oneself rather than an automaton; to become what one potentially is; to create one's own personality. The full affirmation of one's uniqueness.
Cantril (1967)	Freedom	The scope to exercise choice; to be, and to become, in one's own way. It involves learning responsibility.
Koestenbaum (1978)	Freedom	Entails a conceptual understanding on one's unique individuality and the decision to take responsibility for what one is and what one does. It is characterized by spontaneity, willpower, and risking action assertively.
Yalom (1980)	Freedom	To be responsible for one's own choices and actions; to be the author of one's own life.

To Yalom (1980), freedom is an existential concern, something deeply experienced. It has two aspects: it is the *awareness* of responsibility for one's own life, and it is the *assumption* of responsibility for one's own life. Taking responsibility for oneself enables a person "to achieve autonomy and his or her full potential" (p. 268).

Responsibility awareness may be blocked by psychic defences, such as the belief that one cannot help oneself because one is compelled by uncontrollable inner forces, or the habit of shifting responsibility on to another person, or the belief that an "ultimate rescuer" will appear and set everything right. Responsibility assumption involves knowing and expressing one's feelings and wishes and exercising one's powers of will and decision to put those wishes into effect.

Koestenbaum's (1978) view of freedom is similar to Yalom's view. Koestenbaum described four different ways in which freedom is experienced: i) a *conceptual understanding* of freedom and responsibility (which is similar to Yalom's notion of responsibility awareness); ii) *spontaneity* which, in popular terms, is expressed as "going with the flow", trusting one's feelings, trusting the messages of the body, or "trusting God fully" (p. 132), and which includes Yalom's notion of knowing and expressing one's wishes; iii) *risking action assertively*, which includes saying no to dominating authorities be they parents, or society, or tradition, or even dominating inner tendencies toward dependency or self-pity; and iv) *willpower*, or the

qualities of self-discipline, resoluteness, and determination. Willpower is an acceptable concept, according to Koestenbaum, if it is recognized as one of these four different manifestations of freedom. But by itself it leads to inflexibility and a narrowness of outlook.

Koestenbaum located these four aspects of freedom within a theory of the person which he called a "phenomenological model of being". This theory will be considered in some detail below since it is an experiential theory and goes some way toward integrating many of the ideas about autonomy and freedom which have been already described in this chapter.

3.7 Koestenbaum's Phenomenological Model of Being

Koestenbaum is a phenomenologist and existential psychotherapist. He calls himself a "clinical philosopher". His theory of the person is derived from his understanding of phenomenology and existential psychology, and from his clinical experience.

His theory rests on the premise that all experience is ambiguous, dialectical, and embodies polarities. To be alive is to experience conflict and contradiction between polar opposites in awareness. He distinguished four principal polarities: the mind-body polarity, the individual-universal polarity, the freedom-facticity polarity, and the conscious-unconscious polarity. The first three of these polarities

feature in Koestenbaum's theory of freedom and they will be discussed in turn.

3.7.1 The mind-body polarity

In Koestenbaum's view, mind and body are two poles in a continuous field. We constantly synthesize in our experience these two poles. While we are free to focus on one or the other, there is always continuity and interpenetration between them. We are at one and the same time both mind and body, subject and object. We are a "being-in-the-world", to use Heidegger's phrase (see Section 2.1).

3.7.2 The individual-universal polarity

As well, according to Koestenbaum, we all experience a universal dimension in our lives. We feel part of a wider stream of consciousness and share the feeling "a consciousness runs through me" as a basic human experience (Koestenbaum, 1978, p.145). Out of this universal consciousness we constitute our individuality as a deliberate conscious affirmation. To be an individual requires a continual act of choice:

The choice to be an individual is a constant condition and a permanent need. It is not something done once and then forgotten. (Koestenbaum, 1978, p.170)

Thus there is an ongoing tension in experience between individuality and universality. This tension, according to Koestenbaum, is also manifested in the tension between individual pursuits and interests and social pursuits and interests.

3.7.3 The freedom-facticity polarity

The third polarity, the freedom-facticity dimension, has already been foreshadowed by reference to the fact that we are free to choose between individuality and universality. There is always the possibility of not taking up the freedom to choose. This is what Koestenbaum called "facticity", although he did not clearly define the term. Facticity can be taken to mean not taking charge of one's life, not accepting responsibility for oneself, and instead, feeling victimized, trapped and helpless. On the other hand, there is the possibility of assuming too much freedom and suffering from forms of mania and delusion and the unrealistic belief that nothing is impossible.

3.7.4 Optimal freedom

Between these two extremes is an optimal level of freedom which is experienced as understanding, spontaneity, risking action assertively, and willpower (see Section 3.6.1 above). According to Koestenbaum these four modes of freedom correspond to the four poles of the mind-body and individual-universal polarities. At the "mind" pole of the mind-body dimension freedom is experienced as the intellectual or conceptual understanding of the meaning and reality of freedom, while at the "body" pole it is experienced as risking action assertively. At the "individual" pole of the individual-universal dimension, freedom is experienced as willpower, while at the "universal" pole it is experienced as spontaneity. Ideally, all four modes constitute freedom, or for the present purposes, autonomy.

There are certain inconsistencies and conceptual complexities in Koestenbaum's theory of freedom. For example, his bi-polar diagrams of freedom are sometimes drawn in two dimensions and sometimes in three dimensions. Hence use is not made of them here. Moreover, he put forward his theory of freedom as a brief illustration of how his bi-polar personality theory could be applied. In itself his theory of freedom was not expounded in sufficient detail. It is included in this review because, despite the inconsistencies, it provided an important source of ideas and insights regarding autonomy as an experience.

3.8 A Phenomenological Interpretation

In this chapter the ideas of various authors concerning autonomy have been collated under the various headings "motivational", "developmental", "interpersonal", and so on. As well, certain other related and overlapping concepts have been outlined. This has been a wide-ranging approach. It was a necessary first step in trying to grasp the nature of the concept in its varying contexts and senses. It has shown that while there are some narrowly defined meanings, such as Murray's notion of rebellious autonomy and Piaget and Kohlberg's notion of moral autonomy, on the whole the concept is broadly interpreted. It refers to the self-expressive, self-assertive, self-deciding capacities of an individual functioning as a whole person - thinking, feeling, willing, and acting in an interpersonal context.

What is sought now is a way of conceptualizing the experience of autonomy from the point of view of the person having the experience. In order to arrive at such an understanding a phenomenological approach was taken. As described in Chapter 2, I used these various insights from the literature together with insights from in-depth interviews with women to develop an interpretation of the experience of autonomy. In the next chapter this interpretation is presented as five interrelated themes.