

Freedom Delimited: An Analysis of Humanist Manifestos

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Abstract—Freedom is ambiguous and elusive. Context is useful for delimiting this ideal, though the notion of *delimited freedom* is itself paradoxical. Humanism, with its emphasis on humans as the basis of inquiry and understanding, places significance on self-defined pursuits of meaning and happiness. Freedom is essential to that endeavor. Given the centrality of freedom to humanist philosophy, an analysis of a strategic subset of their major writings and manifestos holds potential for unlocking insights about freedom. An author-created, corpus of humanist manifestos was collected, comprised of twelve texts from three organizations. Specifically, the corpus contains documents from the following organizations: the American Humanist Association ($n = 3$), Humanists International ($n = 7$), and the Center for Inquiry ($n = 2$), with publications ranging from the year 1933 to 2022. Frequency analyses of words of merit provided context for the centrality of freedom in humanist literature. The term *freedom* was analyzed in terms of time, organization, and functional form to determine the degree of consistency in usage. These insights make explicit what was ambiguous and provide a foundation from which individuals and organizations can articulate and pursue the type of humanist freedom defined in their literature.

Index Terms—Analytics, corpus linguistics, organizational studies, philosophy, semantics

I. INTRODUCTION

Examinations of the human desire for freedom reveal a longing conveyed through various media and literary genres, to include fiction [1–3], philosophical essays [4, 5], social media [6–8], and songs [9–11]. From such a review, one might conclude that freedom is ambiguous and elusive [12, 13]. Context is useful for delimiting the ideal of freedom, though one might critique that *delimiting freedom* is paradoxical. Whereas any number of systems of thought could be used to center a social construction of freedom [14–16], humanism, with its emphasis on humans as the basis for philosophical inquiry and understanding [17–19], provides a pragmatic point of inquest. With emphasis placed on self-defined pursuits of meaning and happiness, humanism focuses on freedom as essential. Given the centrality of freedom to humanist philosophy, an analysis of a strategic subset of their manifestos and major writings (hereafter, manifestos) holds potential for unlocking insights about freedom that are useful for individuals and organizations. To begin, it is useful to provide some initial context from previous examinations of humanist freedom. This is developed more fully in Section II.

Humanism has a long and varied history [20, 22]. Applications of humanist thought have, among other topical areas, covered the domains of philosophy [23, 24], religion

[25, 26], politics [27, 28], medicine [29, 30], and management [31, 32]. More narrowly, constructs of humanist freedom have been examined previously in terms of power [33, 34], and existentialism [35, 36]. Whereas both humanism and humanist freedom have been explored academically, a gap remains in research pertaining to a corpus-based analysis of humanist freedom as revealed through an interrogation of their manifestos. The aim of this study is to address a portion of that gap and contribute to a more rigorous understanding of its content and application potential.

This study attempts the paradoxical, as it endeavors to delimit *freedom* as a means of understanding this ambiguous and elusive concept. Through linguistic analyses of an author-created corpus of twelve manifestos from three organizations one can gain insight regarding humanist constructions of freedom within a specific system of thought. Such insights are potentially useful for those concerned with increasing the authenticity and autonomy of individuals in societal and organizational contexts [32]. The three humanist organizations from which the corpus texts were obtained are the American Humanist Association (AHA), Humanists International (HI), and the Center for Inquiry (CI). The corpus contains texts published from the year 1933 to 2022. In general terms, and based on current articulations, humanism is understood as a philosophical stance emphasizing human beings as the basis of philosophical inquiry and understanding [37]. This descriptive linguistic study made use of word frequencies to assess the humanist construction of freedom. Specifically, analysis of the frequencies of words of merit provided context for the centrality of freedom in humanist manifestos. Subsequently, the *freedom* was analyzed in terms of time, organization, and functional form. Collectively, these comparisons and categorizations established a consistency of usage that make explicit what was ambiguous and provides a foundation that individuals and organizations can articulate and pursue the types of humanist freedoms envisioned. Since the focus of this study is on humanist constructions of freedom as revealed through an analysis of texts, these findings are of potential interest to an international audience focused upon language, literature, and linguistics.

As the name suggests, humanism transcends geographic, national, and political borders through its emphasis on essential elements of existence. With a focus on humanist manifestos, this study is relevant to an international audience of academics and practitioners concerned with applications of language, literature, and linguistics within the social sciences. Previous research has addressed discourse analysis [38–40], business [41–43], environmentalism [44–46], and sociopolitical concerns [47–49]. These suggest an interest for linguistic-based understandings of pragmatic concerns, of which freedom is assuredly one. Given such a foundation, it is possible to turn attention to the layout of this paper.

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The composition of this study follows a standard research format. A survey of relevant literature is provided covering previous research related to humanism as a system of thought, manifestos as a form of literature, and how organizations appropriate and propagate information in their social constructions (Section II). A methodology section details how the texts used in this study were identified and collected, how the author-created corpus of humanist manifestos was created, and how the results were generated and analyzed (Section III). The results are then presented in Section IV. A conclusion is used to summarize key findings, discuss limitations of study, explore potential extensions, and articulate a potential path forward (Section V). Moving forward toward a better understanding of humanist freedom benefits from the context provided from research related to humanism, manifestos, and organizations. That research is presented in the following section.

II. HUMANISM, MANIFESTOS, & ORGANIZATIONS

As indicated in the introduction (Section I), this study attempts to delimit humanist freedom to first understand it, and subsequently to propagate its emancipatory potential. Placing this aim in context benefits from a review of prior research related to humanism, manifestos, and organizations. Each provides useful context. Humanism is a system of thought in which the notions of freedoms delimited in this study are formed and articulated. The focus on manifestos provides depth as to why the selection of those texts provides a powerful source for corpus development. Lastly, the focus on organizations provides reference to one of the primary places in which modern freedom is constrained. One can start with an examination of humanism.

A. Humanism

Like humanism itself, constructs of humanist freedom have been explored in a variety of contexts. Research informed by humanism and focused upon freedom has been conducted, among others, in the areas of art [50–51], peace, [52–53], and organizational management [54–55]. Essential to humanist notions of freedom is an exploration of how individuals construct values and ethics. As Palacios explained, from a humanist perspective “it is reasonable to consider the limitations of radical freedom and the prerogative to self-construct one’s own set of values” [56]. Such an endeavor is aligned with existentialist philosophy. It is within that area that humanist freedom is partially delimited. In examining the existential humanism of Beauvoir, Petterson described three types of existential humanist freedom: a) *ontological* (i.e., what comes from being human), b) *concrete* (i.e., the degree of freedom one poses in each situation), and c) *moral* (i.e., what is freely chosen or enacted by individuals) [57]. That partitioning is far from exhaustive, and other taxonomies are available for understanding humanist freedom. According to Pop, Marino had a tripartite division of humanist freedom focused upon a) freedom of conscience, b) freedom of expression, and c) freedom of thinking [58]. Inevitably, humanist freedom exists within a network of power. As Bohman explained, “in any given institutional context, various powers and forms of freedom are deeply interconnected and interacting, so that

freedom in its full exercise depends on a complex set of conditions, relationships and practices” [34]. This insight points to why an understanding of humanist freedom benefits from its examination within organizational structures. Given the role of manifestos as organizational pronouncements it is beneficial to examine the literary form and function of manifestos prior to exploring organizational dynamics more generally. A brief review of manifestos is presented.

B. Manifestos

What is a manifesto? Answering this question is facilitated by an examination of prior research on forms and functions of manifestos in general prior to exploring research related to the narrower confines of humanist manifestos. Starting with the etymology of the word manifesto reveals that the term came to English from Latin and means *to make public*. The word is derived from the Latin word *manifestus*, meaning *obvious*. Based on its etymology, manifestos can be understood as documents designed to make a given position publicly obvious. Often manifestos are organizational or political documents. As Robertson explained “manifestos are...official statements of intended policy...covering all statements of political intent or...support in a revolutionary situation” [59]. Given the purpose articulated by Robertson, it is not surprising that manifestos are used commonly and broadly. Previous research has examined manifestos covering topics from education [60–61] to feminism [62–63], from sexualities [64] to race [65], and from workers/labor movements [66–67] to global economics [68]. These applications suggest that nearly any individual, group, or organization could write a manifesto to take a public stance on an issue. But whereas anybody *could* write a manifesto, not everybody *does*. Fahs observed “the genre of manifestos has largely remained understudied,” and that “the manifesto genre seems to work more easily for students who already think about and experience oppression in their lives” [69]. Fahs’ reference to the “genre of manifestos” provides additional support of the view that a study of humanist manifestos is of potential interest to those studying language, literature, and linguistics. The need for new manifestos emerges as societies change. A relatively recent example bridges the gap between manifestos and organizations. In a technocratic application, informed by a humanist perspective that speaks to the increasing split between humans and the technologies they use, Knievel explained manifestos “occasion a rethinking of...academic notions of technology and the humanistic that have assumed at least an uneasy coexistence and at most complete separation from one another” [70]. Those working in organizations, shaped and constrained by technology, might benefit from a rigorous understanding of humanist freedom. This suggests the relevance of organizational research.

C. Organizations

Working individuals habitually engage in sensemaking [71, 72] as part of their social construction of organizational reality [73, 74]. In those processes, individuals and institutions routinely make choices regarding communication form and function [75, 76]. In the process the autonomy and authenticity of workers and management alike are potentially constrained [32]. There is space here for the creation of organizational manifestos, informed by a more rigorous

understanding of the various forms of humanist freedom, to contribute to the emancipation of those languishing in organizational drudgery. Previous research on organizational communication has addressed, among others, the topics of mission statements [77, 78], identity [79, 80], and ethics [81, 82]. An important ethical, organizational freedom is the ability for workers to dissent. Such a freedom is recognized inconsistently across organizations. As Kassing explained, “organizations vary in their ability and efforts to create work-places defined by greater freedom of speech,” and that “employees become socialized through their employment history to accept the commonly held notion that all or most organizations remain relatively intolerant of employee dissent” [83]. The results of this study can substantiate a more rigorous understanding of humanist freedom, that can assist in a defense of the universal right for worker dissent within organizations and institutions.

This survey of literature contains a brief examination of previous research related to humanism, manifestos, and organizations. These research threads suggest utility from creating and analyzing a corpus of humanist manifestos. Specifically, this approach addressed the identified research gap related to a rigorous examination of humanist freedom. Addressing that gap holds potential for greater authenticity and autonomy individually and organizationally. The approach taken in this study to address that concern is described in the methodology (Section III).

III. METHODOLOGY

Informed by the research related to humanism, manifestos, and organizations, covered in the survey of literature (Section II), it is possible to turn attention to the methodology of this study. This study was approached as a descriptive analysis of an author-created corpus of humanist manifestos. As such, this methodology primarily covers the techniques used to create and analyze the corpus. More specifically, the methodology covers corpus construction, determination of *words of merit*, time series analysis, organizational analysis, and analysis of freedom types, prepositional forms, and the contextual elements of freedom. Since corpus construction is foundational to all subsequent analyses the approach used for its construction is presented first.

This author-created corpus of humanist manifestos was comprised of twelve texts obtained from three humanist organizations in October 2022. The selection of documents was informed by prior research examining key foundational documents and declarations of humanist organizations [84–85]. The corpus is comprised of the following documents (organization, publication year): *A Humanist Manifesto* (AHA, 1933), *The Amsterdam Declaration* (HI, 1952), *Humanist Manifest II* (AHA, 1973), *A Secular Humanist Declaration* (CI, 1980), *The Affirmations of Humanism: A Statement of Principles* (CI, 1987), *Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics* (HI, 1988), *IHEU Minimum Statement on Humanism* (HI, 1996), *The Amsterdam Declaration 2002* (HI, 2002), *Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III* (AHA, 2003), *The Brussels Declaration* (HI, 2007), *General Statement of Policy* (HI, 2015), and *Declaration of Modern Humanism* (HI, 2022). The publication year and organizational source are

included here as they are used in the time series and organizational analyses. Despite ongoing debate regarding the nature of *free* computer software [86], the corpus was constructed in the free corpus software, #LancsBox [87]. The list of words and frequencies were generated in #LancsBox and systematically reduced to *words of merit*.

As indicated, the initial list of words for this study were generated within #LancsBox. Once compiled, this list was reduced to form the top 10 words of merit. The approach used here is like that used in previously published research [88]. To obtain the top 10 words of merit, the initial word frequencies were compared to the top 100 most common words in English (e.g., *the, a, is, you*), and those words were removed from consideration. A second, subjective, review of the list was conducted to remove any common words in English which were considered too common to be meaningful within the context of humanist manifestos. Any word omitted in this part of the process will be presented in the results to allow the reader to ascertain the reasonableness of the determination and treatment. The top 10 list of words of merit is useful in positioning *freedom* within the corpus. Once positioned, the relative frequencies of the term *freedom* will be compared at the document level to assess the degree of consistency in terms of publication year and organizational source. The techniques used for these two comparisons are similar but warrant individual treatment for completeness.

Within corpus linguistics it is considered useful to use relative frequencies rather than absolute frequencies when the document lengths are significantly different. As such, the time series and organizational analyses of the documents contained in the corpus were conducted on the relative frequency values for the word *freedom*. For the time series analysis, the documents were split into earlier and later groups of publications, with the earlier group containing the documents from the year 1933 to 1988, and the latter group containing the documents from the year 1996 to 2022. A boxplot comparison was created in Excel using standard techniques. The visual comparison provided by the boxplot was augmented by using a nonparametric Mann-Whitney *U*-test to determine if a statistically significant difference in median values existed between the groups ($\alpha = 0.05$) in terms of the relative frequency of the term *freedom*. This approach was largely replicated for the organizational assessment.

As indicated, the techniques used for the organizational analyses were like those of the time series analysis. Since the construction of the boxplot and the testing procedure (i.e., Mann-Whitney *U*-test) were the same, those aspects are not presented again here. However, since the groupings differ, that aspect requires explication. In terms of the organizational source, it was determined that approximately half of the documents contained in the corpus came from HI. Based on this determination the two groupings used were HI and the alternative (AHA and CI). These groupings and comparisons allowed for determining if a statistically significant difference in the relative frequency of the term *freedom* existed based on organization. If these document-level assessments confirm the reasonableness of examining corpus-level outputs, each occurrence of *freedom* will be assessed as either a type, form, or as a contextual element.

The last form of analysis of humanist freedom was the categorization of each observation of the term within the corpus. The first analytic form assessed is when the noun *freedom* was modified by an adjective (e.g., academic

freedom). The second analytic form assessed is when freedom is presented in propositional form (e.g., freedom of). The last analytic form is when contextual elements are included around the term freedom (e.g., democracy, incarceration). If a given observation defied categorization it was labeled as *other*. An assessment of the degree to which the findings are limited by that imprecision will be provided.

As described, this study was a descriptive analysis of an author-created corpus of humanist manifestos. Essential steps to corpus construction and the determination of words of merit, were addressed along with the analytic techniques for assessing the time series and organizational analyses. Lastly, the methodological approach for establishing the freedom types, prepositional forms, and contextual elements were reviewed. With each major section of the methodology of this study explained, it is possible to proceed to the results.

IV. RESULTS

Consistent with the methodology (Section III), these results were generated in December 2022. A humanist manifesto corpus was created consisting of twelve documents obtained from three organizations. The following areas were assessed. First, the word frequencies of the top 10 words of merit within the corpus were assessed (Table I). This assessment was used to determine the degree of coherence in the observed terms and to ascertain the prominence of *freedom* within the corpus. Next, the relative frequency of freedom was compared between the earlier and later works within the corpus (Fig. 1), and a similar assessment was conducted between the works of HI and those of alternative organizations (Fig. 2). These results provide an analytic foundation for analyzing *freedom* within a single corpus. Lastly, the humanist notions of freedom were analyzed in terms of types (Table II), prepositional form (Table III), and contextual elements (Table IV). The top 10 words of merit within the humanist manifesto corpus is presented first.

TABLE I: WORD FREQUENCIES FOR THE TOP TEN WORDS OF MERIT

Word	Frequency
Human	212
Rights	128
Freedom	108
Right	102
Religious	95
World	93
Religion	89
Humanism	85
Life	82
Society	69

As indicated in Table I, *freedom* is the third most frequent word of merit ($n = 108$). To get to the top 10 words of merit, 32 words were omitted. Of the 32 words that were omitted, 28 (~87%) were on the list of 100 most frequent words in English. Through a subjective review of the remaining terms the following four terms were omitted: *is*, *are*, *must*, and *should*. Within the top 10 words of merit, there are potential clusters that are suggestive of themes. First, the terms *human* ($n = 212$) and *humanism* ($n = 85$). Second, humanists are concerned with *human rights* ($n = 128$) and *right* ($n = 102$). The context is the *world* ($n = 93$) and *society* ($n = 69$). Lastly, the humanist perspective is one in which the *religious* ($n = 95$)

and *religion* ($n = 89$) are explicitly and frequently addressed. For this study, the focus is on delimiting the humanist notion of *freedom* as a means of establishing a foundation from which individuals and organizations can articulate and pursue notions of authenticity and autonomy. To ensure that the corpus of humanist manifestos was internally consistent it useful to assess the relative frequency of the term *freedom* in earlier and later works (Fig. 1), and from differing organizations (Fig. 2).

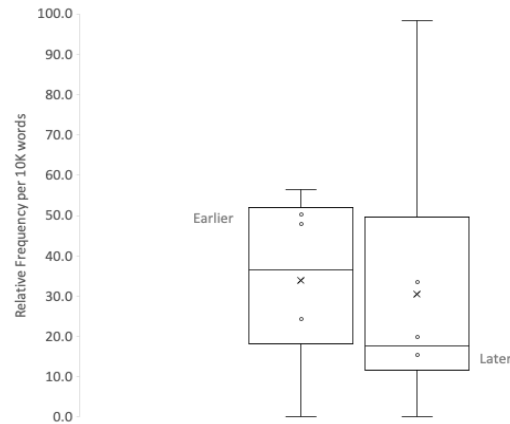


Fig. 1. Boxplot comparison of *Freedom* in earlier & later manifestos.

The publications were divided into two equal groups consisting of six earlier publications (i.e., published between 1933 and 1988) and six later publications (i.e., published between 1996 and 2022). The relative frequencies per 10K words of the term *freedom* were compared through both a boxplot analysis (Fig. 1) and the Mann-Whitney *U*-test. As depicted in Fig. 1, the boxplot reveals that there is an observable difference in terms of the respective median values between earlier (Mdn = 36.4 per 10K words) and later (Mdn = 17.7 per 10K words) works. Those variations were within the interquartile ranges. No appreciable difference in mean values between earlier ($M = 34.0$ per 10K words) and later ($M = 30.4$ per 10K words) works was observable. More variation in relative frequencies were observable in the later works than in the earlier group. Adding rigor to the boxplot assessment, the results of the Mann-Whitney *U*-test suggest no statistically significant difference between the median values of the earlier and later works ($U = 12.5, p = 0.4237$). The lack of statistical difference between earlier and later works suggests that combining these works into a single corpus is reasonable. This comparison is extended to account for potential differences in organizational source (Fig. 2).

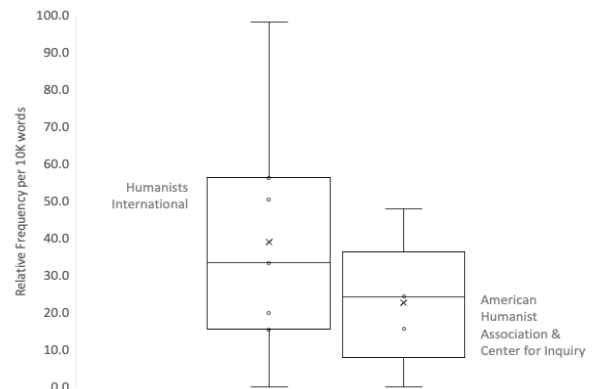


Fig. 2. Boxplot comparison of *Freedom* by humanist organization.

The comparison of the relative frequency of the term *freedom* as presented in Fig. 2 is like that of Fig. 1. Unlike the earlier and later works which divided equally, there was an imbalance between the number of publications resident within the two groupings. Of the twelve publications, seven were obtained from HI, with five being the combined total from AHA and CI. Consistent with the previous approach, the relative frequencies per 10K words of the term *freedom* were compared through both a boxplot analysis (Fig. 2) and again statistically using the Mann-Whitney *U*-test. As depicted in Fig. 2, the boxplot reveals slight observable differences in median values between the works from HI (Mdn = 33.4 per 10K words) and those of the alternative group (Mdn = 24.4 per 10K words). Again, those variations were within the interquartile ranges. A similar difference was observable in mean values between the works from HI (M = 39.1 per 10K words) and the alternative (M = 22.5 per 10K words). More variation in relative frequencies were observable for the works from HI. The Mann-Whitney *U*-test results suggest no statistically significant difference between the median values of the two organizational groupings ($U = 12.5, p = 0.7308$). The lack of statistical difference between the two organizational groupings further suggests that combining these works into a single corpus is reasonable.

With these observational and statistical findings in place, it is possible to examine more closely the 108 occurrences of *freedom* in the corpus of humanist manifestos. Through this exploration, a richer understanding of the types of freedom articulated by humanist organizations, along with the linguistic epiphenomena, was possible. This assessment examines the various constructions of humanist freedom in terms of type (Table II), prepositional form (Table III), and contextual elements (Table IV). Each offers something powerful in unpacking humanist freedom.

TABLE II: FREQUENCIES OF FREEDOM TYPES

Freedom Type	Frequency
Artistic/Human/Individual	15
Religious/Moral	4
Possible	4
Reproductive	3
Cultural	2
Economic	2
Academic	1

As indicated in Table II, there were 31 occurrences within the subset types of freedom identified in the corpus. This number represents about 29% of the total 108 occurrences of *freedom*. Notions of artistic, human, and individual freedom ($n = 15$) are more prevalent than religious/moral ($n = 4$), possible ($n = 4$), reproductive ($n = 3$), cultural ($n = 2$), or economic freedoms ($n = 2$). These results suggest that artistic and creative outlets are essential to the manifestation of humanist freedom. Echoing the findings reported in Table I, notions of religion and religious freedom are part of a humanist construction of freedom. Somewhat relatedly, it is perhaps useful to note that academic freedom was referenced a single time when it was noted that inclusion of creationist theory in biology is a “serious threat both to academic freedom and to the integrity of the educational process.” Whereas some may claim it is esoteric, these results suggest that humanism is not narrowly focused on intellectuals and their academic freedom. These findings were extended by

examining the prepositional forms of freedom resident within the corpus. These results are presented in Table III.

TABLE III: FREQUENCIES OF FREEDOM PREPOSITIONS

Preposition Form	Frequency
Freedom of...	46
Expression/Speech	23
Religion/Belief	17
Inquiry/Development	3
Association	1
Other	2
Freedom to...	7
Express	2
Inquire/Cultivate	2
Have access to healthcare	1
Withdraw	1
Other	1
Freedom from...	5
Control/Servitude	3
Harassment	1
Want	1
Freedom for...	2
Woman to make individual choices	1
Different moral and political values	1

The prepositional forms used to articulate notions of freedom can vary. In this study, there were 60 occurrences (~56% of the total) identified within the subset of freedom prepositions. As indicated in Table III, the form *freedom of* is the most frequently used prepositional form within the corpus ($n = 46$). Of that form of freedom, the most frequent was the freedom of expression/speech ($n = 23$), followed by freedom of religion/belief ($n = 17$). Less frequent were notions of inquiry ($n = 3$) and association ($n = 1$). There was near equivalence between positive freedom (i.e., freedom to; $n = 7$) and negative freedom (i.e., freedom from; $n = 5$). For those interested in safeguarding against the application of coercive power, individually or organizationally, it is worth noting the finding that humanism explicitly expresses that one should have freedom from control ($n = 3$). Specifically, within the corpus was the view that individuals should be free from “religious control,” and “jingoistic government control,” as well as “involuntary servitude or slavery.” The findings labeled *other* are discussed more fully following the review of results presented in Table IV. Collectively, these results point to a dominant stylistic choice to discuss freedoms prepositionally. Examining humanist freedom in terms of contextual elements provides another perspective from which to understand this concept. Those findings are presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV: FREQUENCIES OF CONTEXTUAL FREEDOM ELEMENTS

Contextual Freedom	Frequency
Freedom enhancing elements	8
Freedom constraining elements	4
Absence of freedom/anti-freedom	3
Other	2

Within Table IV, there were 17 manifestations of freedom contextual elements, which is about 16% of the total 108 occurrences of the term *freedom*. Nearly half of those incidents ($n = 8$) were freedom enhancing elements. Among the freedom enhancing elements were notions of *liberty*, *democracy*, and *the press*. Less frequent were freedom constraining elements ($n = 4$), that was anything *restricting*,

curtailing, or *suppressing* freedom. Lastly, there were a few occurrences of being without freedom or anti-freedom ($n=3$). Within the results presented in Table III and Table IV there were a few findings categorized as *other*. It is now possible to give some attention those categorizations.

Out of the 108 occurrences of freedom, 5 (~5%) were not specifically categorized. These were abstracted as *other* due to unique semantic challenges posed by phrasing. A few of those occurrences will be presented to illustrate the challenges posed. Within the prepositional category of *freedom of*, there were two such occurrences. The first was the phrase, “cost the freedom of so many,” and the second was, “freedom of each person.” A similar situation existed in the prepositional category *freedom to* when it was noted “freedom to be the principal safeguard for all others.” With these illustrations in mind, it is reasonable to conclude that most of the occurrences (over 95%) of *freedom* within the Humanist Manifesto corpus were able to be categorized in a relatively straightforward fashion, and that those outside direct categorization are not of sufficient quantity or content to fundamentally alter the understandings established here.

This corpus, consisting of twelve documents obtained from three organizations, provides a foundation for delimiting elusive and ambiguous freedom. Behind only the terms *human* ($n = 212$) and *rights* ($n = 128$) in the top 10 words of merit (Table I), *freedom* ($n = 108$) occurred relatively frequently. As conveyed in Table II, the type of freedom is frequently focused on artistic, individual manifestations ($n = 15$), with the major prepositional form and content being focused on freedom of expression/speech (Table III; $n = 23$). As indicated in Table IV, these freedoms are facilitated by the freedom enhancing elements of *liberty*, *democracy*, and *the press* ($n = 8$). Whereas some of the occurrences of freedom within the corpus remained elusive, over 95% of the 108 occurrences of the term *freedom* were amenable to categorization, resulting in relatively few ($n = 5$) occurrences of the designation *other*. Based on these findings one can substantiate that humanism, as revealed through an analysis of the content of its manifestos, is a system of thought in which individual and social freedoms are a point of focus. Based on these findings, one might consider humanist literature as a potential source for conceptualizing and delimiting freedom in individual and organizational contexts. These findings are summarized, along with a brief exploration of limitations and potential extensions of this research, in the following conclusion (Section V).

V. CONCLUSION

Given the human proclivity for freedom, it is informative to explore how humanist organizations have conceptualized *freedom* in their literature. This study examined the delimitations of freedom as observed in an author-created corpus of humanist manifestos. The results suggest that artistic freedom and freedom of expression are frequently referenced, and that human freedom is enhanced through liberty, democracy, and the press. Along with these findings, limitations and extensions were identified.

The first limitation of this study deals with the number of works included in the corpus ($n = 12$). A larger corpus would enable more definitive and nuanced results. The second

limitation, likely related in some ways with the first, is that the corpus was constructed making use of documents from three organizations. Increasing the number of sources would result in a larger corpus with a greater variety of humanist perspectives. Lastly, this study focused on freedom. It is possible that such a focus could incorrectly reduce humanism to being concerned only with freedom. Humanism is focused upon freedom, but that represents only one of its concerns. These limitations create opportunities for extensions.

As indicated, limitations suggest extensions. This study could be extended by creating a larger corpus of humanist documents. These could include organizational memoranda, academic articles, newspaper articles, or social media posts. Widening the aperture of corpus documents would enable more generalizability of the results. Likewise, increasing the number of organizations represented in the study would result in a larger corpus and increase the number of perspectives contained therein. This study focused on the humanist notion of freedom. Based on these results at least two other elements warrant research. Given the observed frequency of human *rights* ($n = 128$) a more general assessment is in order. Additionally, the frequency of the terms *religious* ($n = 95$) and *religion* ($n = 89$) suggest that a study focused on humanist perspectives on religion are needed as well. With these limitations and extensions in mind, it is possible to conclude with an assessment of the value derived through this delimitation of humanist freedom.

Humans define themselves in a confederation of stories. Not all these stories are fiction, some are conveyed through institutional documents. The literature of manifestos provides fertile ground for assessing and understanding galvanizing concepts within organizations. Freedom is such a concept within humanist organizations. The results of this linguistic examination of humanist manifestos suggest that freedom can be delimited without being constrained.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, R.A.J.; methodology, R.A.J.; analysis, R.A.J. and B.L.H.; writing, original draft preparation, R.A.J.; writing, review and editing, B.L.H.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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