

## Countercontrol in Behavior Analysis

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Countercontrol is a functional class of behavior that is part of Skinner's analysis of social behavior. Countercontrol refers to behavioral episodes comprised of socially mediated aversive controlling conditions and escape or avoidance responses that do not reinforce, and perhaps even punish, controllers' responses. This paper suggests that neglect of countercontrol in modern behavior analysis is unfortunate because the concept applies to interpersonal and social relations the fundamental operant principle that human behavior is both controlled and controlling—humans are not passive and inflexible. Countercontrol is addressed here in terms of conceptual status, contemporary developments in behavior analysis, its importance in a behavior-analytic approach to freedom and cultural design, applications, and research. The main conclusion is that Skinner's formulation of countercontrol is scientifically supported and worthy of increased prominence in behavior analysis.

*Key words:* countercontrol, coercion, control, aversive control, social contingencies

Control is one of the most basic concepts in conceptual, experimental, and applied analyses of behavior, just as control is fundamental to all experimental sciences (e.g., Skinner, 1953, 1972). To study the functional relations between environment and behavior, behavior analysts manipulate (control) environmental variables to determine their effect on behavior. Stimulus control and schedule control are elementary principles. These familiar forms of control are defined by operations and conditions external to the behavior. Thus, we think of scientists controlling their subject matter (the behavior of organisms) by manipulating environmental stimuli and contingencies.

This paper argues that behavior analysis has also recognized a form of control that is, in certain ways, the reciprocal of scientist and environmental control. In particular, Skinner (1953, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1978) proposed countercontrol as necessary for complete behavior analyses of human behavior. Although Skinner referred to countercontrol on many occasions and the concept occasionally appears throughout the behavior-analytic and related literatures, it has received little systematic attention. The purpose of

the present paper is to examine what one commentator (Platt, 1973) called a "pioneering concept" in behavior analysis.

Because, almost without exception (see Baum, 1994), treatments of behavioral countercontrol have been developed by Skinner, this presentation will rely heavily on Skinner's work. The neglect of countercontrol in behavior analysis is unfortunate because this concept applies to interpersonal and social relations the fundamental operant principle that human behavior is both controlled and controlling—humans are not passive and inflexible in their responses to social and interpersonal influence. As I will argue, countercontrol is a way in which individuals regain behavioral freedom when faced with aversive controlling attempts of others, including those of behavior analysts. Indeed, with countercontrol, behavior analysts can highlight positive contributions of a behavioral approach by recognizing that everyone has the potential to overcome socially based aversive attempts at control. This paper concludes that Skinner's formulation of countercontrol is sound and strongly supports increased attention to countercontrol in behavior analysis.

### DEFINING COUNTERCONTROL

Countercontrol is human operant behavior that occurs in response to social

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aversive control. When other people generate aversive conditions, the recipient (i.e., "behavior" or "controllee") may escape or avoid and thereby reinforce controllers' responses; however, the behavior may escape or avoid in ways that do not reinforce, and may even punish, controllers' responses (Skinner, 1953, 1971, 1974). Instead of acting in accord with controlling conditions, controllees sometimes countercontrol; that is, they oppose controlling attempts by moving out of range, attacking, or passively resisting.

Skinner discussed two main types of countercontrol; in each, controllees' actions do not result in reinforcement of controllers' responses. One includes reference to aggressive overt operant responses (counterattack) following emotional behavior elicited by aversive controlling conditions. The other class does not require emotional and aggressive behavior. When Skinner (1953) introduced countercontrol in chapter 20 of *Science and Human Behavior*, he suggested that attempts at control that (a) use force or (b) result in an ultimate advantage to controllers, in opposition to the interest of the controllees, often are aversive and sometimes lead controllees to "show an emotional reaction . . . including operant behavior which injures or is otherwise aversive to the controller. Such behavior may have been reinforced [in the past] by the reduction in similar aversive consequences" (p. 321). Skinner's justification for applying countercontrol in the analysis of responses to attempts at social control was that humans are much more likely to have a requisite history of reinforcement for responding aggressively to social control than to nonsocial control. By way of example, Skinner suggested that aggression might be expected when a group of people blocks our way on a sidewalk because such behavior has previously alleviated similar social conditions. On the other hand, aggression is less likely to have been reinforced when our way was blocked by a fallen tree branch. At this point, Skinner

treated countercontrol as escape from, or avoidance of, aversive stimuli by way of aggressive topographies preceded by emotional behavior. In numerous other places in *Science and Human Behavior* (pp. 323–324, 347, 358–360, 383, 400–401, 411, 447), he discussed the concept without any reference to emotion and aggression. In these cases, behaviors countercontrol by moving out of range of controllers or by resisting passively.

Behavior analysis emphasizes that identical response topographies can be a function of different controlling variables. Any of the response forms that participate in countercontrolling behavior episodes, under other conditions, can be a function of positive reinforcement, for example. Yet certain topographies occur relatively frequently in the presence of aversive conditions established by others and function as countercontrolling behaviors because they result in either contingent nonreinforcement or aversive stimulation for attempts at countercontrol (Sidman, 1989; Skinner, 1953, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1978). Given that escape and avoidance are the functional behavior classes that aversive control occasions, the behavior of controllers who use aversive methods is reinforced and thus not countercontrolled when controllees escape from or avoid aversive stimuli by acting in ways specified by the controllers (Skinner, 1971): Students turn in homework, workers increase their production, geriatric patients sit quietly. Nevertheless, people may escape or avoid in other ways (i.e., by countercontrolling behavior). Countercontrol escape and avoidance, although not restricted to any particular topographies, often take common forms including attack, aggression, assassination, murder, divorce, military desertion, religious apostasy, religious reformation, protest, revolt, rebellion, revolution, defection, dropping out, truancy, vandalism, absenteeism, criticism, sabotage, slowdowns, strikes, boycotts, inaction, failure to comply (as with medical or

psychosocial recommendations or requests), active or passive resistance, inattention, daydreaming, quitting, feigning illness, cheating, disrupting classes or meetings, and even "turning on the charm."

Countercontrol is not a basic principle of behavior. Because countercontrol is always either avoidance or escape behavior, this behavior class is only unique insofar as the behavior is (a) confronted with some form of aversive interpersonal or social controlling stimulation and (b) responds to oppose control rather than to reinforce it by "giving in." Countercontrol directs our attention to the many ways in which humans use aversive controlling procedures, often inadvertently, and the predictable outcomes of doing so.

Countercontrolling responses need not invariably be effective. Just as not all instances of responses maintained by positive reinforcement must produce positive reinforcers, not all responses maintained by negative reinforcement will result in escape or avoidance and nonreinforcement or punishment of the controller's responses. The empirical justification for classifying a particular response as escape or avoidance—a past history of negative reinforcement contingencies—often will not be available to the analyst. However, the proposition that such a history is functionally related to countercontrolling behavior is empirically testable.

### CONCEPTUAL STATUS OF COUNTERCONTROL

Control was a central concept in Skinner's behaviorism and was especially emphasized in *Science and Human Behavior* (1953), which contained entire chapters entitled "The Controlling Environment," "Self-Control," "Personal Control," "Group Control," "Economic Control," "Culture and Control," and the final one, "The Problem of Control." The concept of countercontrol derives from the fundamental behavior-analytic position

that behavior is always controlled or caused (e.g., Skinner, 1947, 1953). Here the behavior analyst takes the commonly accepted scientific view of a lawful subject matter, hence one amenable to prediction and control.

Skinner (1953, 1981) argued for a type of causality that was discovered in the study of living systems. According to the principle of consequential causality or selection by consequences, responses occur and are followed by environmental consequences that control the occurrences of similar responses in the future. There is an inherent reciprocity of behavior and environment because environmental consequences are not independent of behavior. Consequences are produced by behavior; thus, behavior controls consequences and is in turn controlled by them (Skinner, 1953, 1974). By starting with the axioms of behavior as always controlled and consequential causality, Skinner paved the way to a conceptualization of control as always environmental but never separate from behavior, for example, "We all control, and we are all controlled" (1953, p. 438). Skinner (1974) suggested that "We often overlook the fact that human behavior is also a form of control" (p. 189), yet "That an organism should act to control the world around it is as characteristic of life as breathing or reproduction" (p. 189). The foundation for countercontrol is that human behavior is both a function of the environment and a source of control over it.

Skinner found that countercontrol was indispensable in understanding human behavior because of the prevalence of aversive control in human relations. Skinner (1953, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1978) identified many methods of control used in interpersonal and cultural relations and suggested that some can be relatively nonaversive: supplying information, presenting opportunities for action, pointing out logical relationships, appealing to reason, education, moral discourse, persuasion, cajolery, seduction, incite-

ment, emotional conditioning of various sorts, certain procedures of motivational control, drugs, prompts, hints, suggestions, and positive reinforcement. Other more aversive methods include authoritative commands, threat of force, force, threat of punishment, punishment, deprivation, removal of positive reinforcers, and restraint (Skinner, 1971, 1972). Contingencies of survival have prepared humans to struggle and escape when confronted with environmental conditions that are harmful or threatening (Skinner, 1971). Countercontrol is the class of escape and avoidance behaviors occasioned by aversive environmental conditions that controllers establish.

Sidman (1989) devoted a book to the deleterious individual and cultural consequences of humans' use of aversive control. Like Skinner, Sidman warned of the harmful effects of coercion, including counterattack and other forms of countercontrol.

### COUNTERCONTROL AND CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Analysis of countercontrol is facilitated by recent developments in behavior analysis. Behavior analysts have refined the concept of environment and expanded the concept of stimulus with the introduction of *setting factors* or *setting events* (Bijou & Baer, 1961, 1978; Wahler & Fox, 1981), and the related term, *establishing operations* (Michael, 1982, 1993). Briefly put, some behavior analysts now recommend the analytic advantage of adding a term that incorporates events not clearly handled by the three-term unit (i.e., discriminative stimulus, response, reinforcer). Setting events and establishing operations refer to various environmental conditions, including previous stimulus-response interactions, that function to alter the momentary probability of responses and the function of stimuli and consequences. This conceptualization prompts analysts to

include events more complex and of longer durations than the typical discriminative stimulus in operant interactions. By this analysis, socially mediated controlling conditions function as setting factors or establishing operations for countercontrolling responses. The newer framework enables behavior analysts to be more precise in analyses of countercontrol.

Indeed, the contemporary version of behavior analysis clarifies a conceptual aspect of countercontrol that is only implicit in Skinner's presentation: Countercontrol can occur at two levels. According to Michael (1982, 1993), aversive stimulation typically is an establishing operation. Michael (1993) classifies socially mediated aversive stimulation of the sort that is countercontrolled as learned or conditioned establishing operations. At one level, countercontrolling behavior can result in avoidance or escape from particular short-term consequences, along with nonreinforcement or punishment of the controller's responses. For example, a teacher threatens a student with detention and withdraws the specific threat when the student threatens the teacher with a serious allegation. In other instances, countercontrolling responses are reinforced when pervasive and long-lasting coercive contingencies are removed or made less aversive. For example, the student drops out of school or employees complain about a supervisor who subsequently reduces aversive control procedures. In this second type of case, individuals may avoid or escape specific short-term consequences (e.g., threats, harsh reprimands) contingent on the response that occurs but also avoid or escape long-standing aversive contingencies in which those consequences participate. The aversive contingencies that the countercontrolling response counters are setting factors or establishing operations.

Willems (1974) suggested that applied behavior analysis would profit from a more ecological-systems approach. Ecobehavioral analysis is now well established (e.g., Rogers-Warren

& Warren, 1977; Schroeder, 1990). An ecobehavioral approach is marked especially by recognition that behavioral episodes involve multiple interdependent participating factors. When data are obtained on two or more response measures, otherwise undetected positive or negative side effects of interventions may appear (e.g., Wahler & Hann, 1987; Willems, 1974). Numerous basic (e.g., Delprato, 1986; Henton & Iversen, 1978) and applied investigations (e.g., Voeltz & Evans, 1982) have shown that interventions targeting and modifying one response are often accompanied by response covariation, or changes in nontargeted responses. Response covariation or patterning is a characteristic of behavioral organization apparent in many behavioral episodes, including those called countercontrol. Variables that coercively control target responses often modify other responses we call countercontrolling ones. Thus, countercontrol may include changes in multiple components of behavior (i.e., nontargeted responses) and, in this way, fits well with the increasing emphasis on ecological-systems considerations in behavior analysis.

### IMPORTANCE OF COUNTERCONTROL

Approximately 25 years after Skinner formally introduced the concept, Balsam and Bondy (1978) argued that countercontrol had yet to facilitate analysis of complex behavior and implied that we would be better off without it. Given that countercontrol is but a subclass of negative reinforcement, might it be preferable to discard the term? Consideration of how Skinner applied countercontrol in his system tempers such a suggestion. Indeed, Skinner gave countercontrol a leading role in his conceptual analysis of social control and freedom and in his approach to cultural design.

#### *Human Freedom*

When people speak of being free, they commonly rely on feelings of be-

ing free. But the feeling of freedom is not a reliable indicator (Skinner, 1971). When we describe to ourselves and others that we are free, the environmental conditions surrounding our behavior, along with our environmental history, control our self-descriptions as well as the behavior referred to as free. The main requirement for feeling free is that controlling attempts or variables are not identified. Persons whose behavior is under the control of positive reinforcement often say that they feel free because the controlling variables can be inconspicuous. Skinner (1971) used the case of state lotteries to extract cryptotaxes as particularly egregious examples of controlling conditions that lead people to "freely" part with their money. The reciprocal of freedom is the control of human behavior (Skinner, 1972, p. 8) and behavior is always controlled. People value so-called freedom because it pertains to a particular type of control, namely those methods that are not aversive and therefore do not occasion countercontrol.

Skinner (1971) warns us that to use the absence of countercontrolling behavior as a marker of freedom is ultimately dangerous and self-defeating. Uncritical acceptance of our own and others' claims of freedom can contribute to controlling practices that result in deferred aversive consequences to the controllee. To its promoters, freedom appears to be especially threatened when "behavior generated by positive reinforcement has deferred aversive consequences" (Skinner, 1971, p. 33), when the control is intentional, and when the controllee's losses are ultimately translated into gains to controllers.

According to Skinner (1971), champions of freedom have taken the position that all control is wrong and should be either eliminated or countercontrolled. However, this overlooks control that does not have readily detectable aversive consequences. Behavior analysis suggests that the route to what people describe as freedom is

not to abolish control or free them from it but rather "to analyze and change the kinds of control to which they are exposed" (Skinner, 1971, p. 43). In particular, humans need (a) to eliminate aversive control (often a practical impossibility), (b) to identify positive reinforcement and other inconspicuous forms of control that have deferred aversive consequences, and (c) to substitute positive reinforcement contingencies without such consequences. This would eliminate the conditions that occasion countercontrol. Unfortunately, although completely nonaversive control possibly represents the ideal behavior-analytic form of control (Sidman, 1989; Skinner, 1948, 1968, 1974), it is unlikely that all conditions that promote countercontrol can be eliminated from cultures. For example, even Skinner's utopia, *Walden Two*, included a planned vehicle for protest (Skinner, 1948). Some implications of countercontrol for cultural design are taken up next.

### *Design of Cultures*

Skinner's (1948, 1971, 1972, 1978) approach to the social environment, or culture, followed from his overall framework. A culture is made up of contingencies that bear on the behavior of its members. Behavior analysis reveals that institutions of social control such as religion, government, and education rely heavily on aversive control, which accounts for many of the unfavorable countercontrolling reactions individuals and groups have had to aspects of their culture.

First on the list of behavior-analytic recommendations for the design of the ideal culture is the elimination of aversive and coercive control. This would reduce the frequency of unanticipated and harmful by-products of control resulting from countercontrolling behavior (Sidman, 1989). But control, of course, cannot be eliminated. The type of control recommended is publicly visible positive reinforcement contingencies without deferred aversive con-

sequences. Disguised control should be avoided. Cultural designers need to arrange avenues of effective countercontrol. Effective countercontrol will be available if control is conspicuous and if there is a balance between control and countercontrol. For equal distribution of control and countercontrol, individuals who are the sources of control must be identified and their behavior must be available to controllees. Delegation of control should be avoided, because this renders controllers' behavior inaccessible to controllees (Skinner, 1971).

Advances in the science of behavior increase the importance of countercontrol (Krapfl & Vargas, 1977). The more we know about behavior, the more easily it can be controlled. Avenues of countercontrol must accompany new techniques of control to prevent controllers from working to the detriment of controllees. Critics of Skinner's (1972) cultural design (e.g., Bethlehem, 1987; Chomsky, 1972; Koestler, 1968) seem to have overlooked his proposal that explicit countercontrol measures be part of the control procedures that follow from the science of behavior. Perhaps this point alone justifies retaining, and even emphasizing, countercontrol in behavior analysis. "Grand manipulators" (see Black, 1973) are not likely to propose institutionalization of potent techniques for monitoring and overriding their practices.

In sum, Skinner recommended a balance of control and countercontrol in the design of an effective culture; however, he did not place all of the burden of cultural design on such balancing. Skinner (1973) stressed that a system of control and countercontrol, although possibly yielding the greatest good to the greatest number, "will not necessarily have survival value, and those who are concerned for the future of a culture must go beyond the countercontrolling pattern" with "practices which bring people under the control of a more remote future" (p. 265).

## RELATED RESEARCH

Behavioral service providers have many opportunities to confront countercontrolling behavior. Consumers frequently complain, drop out, fail to follow recommendations, and engage in other defensive and withdrawal behaviors. This section selectively samples a few applications of countercontrol in applied behavior analysis to illustrate the importance of the concept to current work.

Kazdin (1977) and Wolf (1978) introduced social validity assessments as a means to address consumers' acceptance of programs. Typically, program managers collect acceptability or validity data by asking consumers to complete a questionnaire. Schwartz and Baer (1991) characterize social validity assessment as a defensive technique whereby interventionists can identify and address discontent before consumers begin more extreme forms of countercontrol such as ignoring program procedures, withdrawing completely, or recommending to others that they avoid the program.

If social validity assessments identify incipient countercontrolling behavior, what can behavior analysts do to preempt it, and how can they proactively decrease the likelihood of countercontrol in the first place? Fawcett (1991) proposed that community researchers form collaborative relationships with research participants. Miller (1991) strongly endorsed Fawcett's proposal in a thoughtful and succinct commentary devoted to countercontrol in applied behavior analysis. Furthermore, Redmon (1992) suggested that participative management systems might reduce countercontrol in organizations.

Applied behavior analysts have reported patterns of responding that might be effectively classified as instances of countercontrol. Boren and Colman (1970, Experiment 2) examined several point-economy contingency systems in the management of a psychiatric ward for soldiers with his-

stories of serious problem behaviors (e.g., convictions for minor crimes, absences without leave). One response targeted was attendance at a morning unit meeting. Patients who attended the meeting received 20 points, exchangeable for a variety of privileges, but attendance was not 100%. It occasionally was as low as 70%, and because some absentees were observed sleeping, the authors established a contingency in which a 10-point fine was levied on each patient who stayed in bed instead of attending the meeting. The group's response to the fine condition was dramatic and had the appearance of countercontrolling behavior. Participants dramatically decreased attendance, which ranged from 0% to 60% over 5 days of the fine condition. Furthermore, other side effects occurred. For example, the men's whispered use of the word "rebellion" was heard, some ordered others to get back into bed, four went absent without leave, and others committed rule infractions such as fighting. Upon withdrawal of the fine contingency, attendance at the meeting increased to levels close to those of the initial phase.

A few behavior analysts have begun to explore countercontrol in organizations. Work settings seem especially conducive to various aversive control techniques and historically have given rise to a variety of apparently countercontrolling behavior such as strikes, slowdowns, violence, sabotage, malicious destruction, and unsanitary behavior. Ludwig and his collaborators (Ludwig & Geller, 1991, 1997, 1999; Ludwig, Geller, & Clarke, in press) conducted a series of controlled studies on the safe driving behavior of professional pizza deliverers. These researchers applied ecological or behavioral systems guidelines (e.g., Willems, 1974), which involved measurement of other responses in addition to targeted responses. In some instances, they reported finding countercontrol with responses targeted by interventions. In other cases, countercontrol seemed to occur in the form of collateral respons-

es. Ludwig and Geller (1997) targeted complete stopping at intersections with an intervention that consisted of goal setting and group feedback. An analysis of group data revealed that the intervention reliably increased complete intersection stops in groups of drivers whose goals were set either participatively or by assignment. However, the two groups responded differently to the intervention when a collateral safe driving response, turn-signal use, was examined. The results for the nontargeted response support suggestions that countercontrol would be reduced by collaboration (Fawcett, 1991; Miller, 1991; Redmon, 1992). The group who participated in setting goals for intersection stops exhibited response induction with an intervention-related increase in turn-signal use in contrast to the assigned goals group, who showed no increase in the nontargeted safe driving response.

The generality of Ludwig and Geller's (1997) finding was supported by a study in which the same researchers targeted turn-signal use and also measured safety-belt use. Ludwig and Geller (1999) used a multiple-baseline design across two pizza stores and presented group data. The intervention designed to increase turn-signal use involved a simple corporate policy statement on the use of turn signals at every intersection that was enclosed with two consecutive biweekly paychecks. The policy statement was accompanied by small increases in turn-signal use with each presentation. Nontargeted safety-belt use decreased substantially concomitant with the first presentation of the policy statement at both stores. The authors suggest that the decrease in the use of safety devices might represent a type of countercontrolling behavior in response to the employer's attempts at control.

Given that aversive stimulation is conditional on individual history and current stimulating conditions, it would not be surprising to find that countercontrol varies from individual to individual under the same set of condi-

tions. This reasoning led Ludwig and Geller (1991) to examine individual data early in their research when they targeted safety-belt use. The multiple-component intervention included interactive group discussion, consensus building, and in-store prompts. It was variously effective across subgroups differing in driving history; however, 1 driver stood out from the rest. During baseline, this individual wore his safety belt on 100% of the measurement occasions. With the onset of intervention, his safety-belt use quickly dropped close to 0%, where it remained.

In another study, Ludwig et al. (in press) targeted turn-signal use and successively introduced two interventions across two groups of drivers from different stores in a multiple-baseline design. At the group level, both interventions were effective for each of the groups. The first intervention (group goal setting and group feedback) increased percentage of turn-signal use over baseline, and the second intervention (publicly displayed individual feedback added to the components of the first intervention) further enhanced the treatment effect. Similar results were obtained with group data for nontargeted safe driving behavior in the form of complete intersection stopping. Yet, 1 driver did not show increases in either the targeted turn-signal use or the nontargeted complete intersection stopping. In fact, both measures changed in directions opposite to those of his group as a whole. Another driver in the same study demonstrated decreases in the nontargeted response during both interventions.

Mawhinney and Fellows-Kubert (1999) examined individual data from a group of telemarketers who worked under a performance quota of 36 completed calls per day. They found that 2 workers' call rates were consistently lower than the others' rates and failed to meet the quota, even though both workers had previously performed at the level of the quota. During an intervention phase involving a positive reinforcement contingency for group per-



formance, the same 2 workers often met the quota but continued to produce call rates far lower than those of their peers, whose output increased substantially. The authors suggest that the quota system functioned as an aversive condition for the 2 workers, who responded with countercontrolling behavior even in the presence of a positive reinforcement contingency. The identification of countercontrolling behavior in individual records (Ludwig & Geller, 1991; Ludwig et al., in press; Mawhinney & Fellows-Kubert, 1999) illustrates that group-data analysis can fail to reveal important unplanned outcomes of interventions.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, conceptualization of countercontrol as a functional class of behavior follows from the facts that (a) all behavior is controlled and (b) in addition to being controlled, humans control. Countercontrol is the natural result of human-produced aversive conditions and the process of negative reinforcement, which itself is an outcome of contingencies of survival (e.g., Skinner, 1971).

Countercontrol is the counterpart to behavior control (i.e., behavior control). Conventionally, behavior analysis descriptively and experimentally analyzes environmental control of behavior. Countercontrol provides one route to analyzing how behaviors control the environment. Increased attention to countercontrol by behavior analysts and laypersons might increase the likelihood that individuals will identify their involvement in exposing others to functionally aversive stimuli, with all this implies regarding behavior. Those who consider countercontrol carefully might be less likely to contribute to conditions that produce countercontrolling responses such as withdrawal, feigned acceptance, and opposition. Furthermore, in cases involving non-compliance, malicious destruction, and opposition, countercontrol can help to

direct informal and formal analytic efforts to the possibility of subtle and individual-specific sources of socially mediated aversive control. The principles underlying behavioral countercontrol recommend that when interacting with others under any conditions we regularly ask, "What might be functionally aversive for this individual and what might he or she do about it?"

Whether or not the version of countercontrol presented here withstands the scrutiny of future behavior analysts, the events of countercontrol will remain with us. Both individually and collectively, humans are likely to continue imposing on others coercive behavior-environment contingencies that occasion defensive responses. Scientific understanding of such circumstances might effectively proceed from the standpoint of social behavior analysis. For the time being, at least, countercontrol continues to show promise as a useful concept in the science of social behavior.

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