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## SYMPOSIUM: THE FUTURE OF AVERSIVE CONTROL RESEARCH

### *PERSPECTIVAS SOBRE EL FUTURO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN EN CONTROL AVERSIVO*

THOMAS S. CRITCHFIELD AND ERIN R. RASMUSSEN

Given the limited attention to aversive control currently granted by contemporary behavior analysis, no consideration of this topic would be complete without a view to the future. If behavior analysis is ever to approximate Skinner's vision of a comprehensive treatment of the psychological world, much remains to be done in the study of aversive control. This special issue closes with a "symposium" consisting of four essays that address intriguing future directions for research on aversive control. Investigators who are actively pursuing questions about aversive control were invited to introduce the general thrust of their work and to discuss its implications, including in revealing important unfinished business for an experimental analysis of aversive control.

Hackenberg and DeFulio describe an ongoing program of investigation into how conditioned consequences are established and maintained in a "token" system for nonhumans. Specific to the present discussion, they describe efforts to employ token-based response cost (negative punishment). This work is important in part because negative punishment frequently is the focus in studies of aversive control with humans and in everyday contingencies as well.

Doughty and colleagues shift the focus to antecedent events by reviewing what is known, and more importantly not known, about stimulus control that is instated by punishment. They argue that most existing studies were not designed to answer the questions that really matter, and suggest some directions that future studies might take.

The final two essays examine the interplay between antecedent and consequent events. Lie and Alsop describe an attempt to formulate a contingency-discriminability model of punishment. Contingency-discriminability theories assert that concurrent operants become differentiated to the extent that stimulus-behavior and behavior-consequence contingencies are discriminable from one another (e.g., see Magoon & Critchfield, 2006). The Lie and Alsop model is shown to have promise in describing discrete-trial signal-de-

tection performance; it will be interesting to see whether the model also can account for the superimposition of punishment upon free-operant concurrent performances.

Finally, Whelan delves into some implications for the understanding of aversive control of contemporary theory concerning verbal behavior and complex stimulus relations. Whelan reminds us that most aversive events in the everyday world are not primary consequences, and discusses some ways in which stimulus-stimulus relations (including verbal ones) may create or transform aversive consequences.