Quoted

Lawrence E. Fraley

Professor of Behaviorology (retired)

[This quote originated as the third footnote, and its source paragraph, from p. 593 in Chapter 18 ("Adjunctive Behavior") of the author's 30–chapter book, *General Behaviorology: The Natural Science of Human Behavior,* (2008), Canton, NY: ABCs. This quote relates a consideration that has applications in contexts far wider than just the topic of its source chapter; for this reason the footnote and its source paragraph are presented here.—Ed.]

… During analyses of operant behavior, the conceptual scheme afforded by the sciences of probability and chaos serve as conceptual devices for managing our ignorance about some of the controlling relations that share in determining the observed behavior. Contrary to fashionable rhetoric, those sciences do not impugn the basic assumption of determinism. They are simply ways of generating the somewhat imprecise descriptive statements that the limited available data will support when no means are available to contact data that would lend more specificity to those statements.[3] …

[3] The bases of recourse to the mathematics of uncertainty are inadequacies in the analyses of the behavior–controlling functional relations between the thematic environmental phenomena and the body of the organism that is reacting to them. Note that a descriptive deficiency in the control that a natural phenomenon can exert over the behavior of an organism is not an occasion to declare that natural events occur spontaneously. Put another way, the laws of physics that govern a set of events are not contingent on those laws and events being understood by some observer. Another expression of this idea posits that the functional events that define a natural phenomenon are independent of any neural behavioral reactions of organisms to those events.