

Chance

1892 | Man's Glassy Essence | W 8:180-1; CP 6.265-6

Wherever chance-spontaneity is found, there in the same proportion feeling exists. In fact, chance is but the outward aspect of that which within itself is feeling.

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...diversification is the vestige of chance-spontaneity; and wherever diversity is increasing, there chance must be operative. On the other hand, wherever uniformity is increasing, habit must be operative.

1893 | Reply to the Necessitarians: Rejoinder to Dr. Carus | The Monist, 3, p. 552; CP 6.606

I do not countenance the idea that Bible stories, for instance, show that nature's laws were violated; though they may help to show that nature's laws are not so mechanical as we are accustomed to think. But I only propose to explain the regularities of nature as consequences of the only uniformity, or general fact, there was in the chaos, namely, the general absence of any determinate law. In fact, after the first step is taken, I only use *chance* to give room for the development of law by means of the law of habits.

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: Causation and Force | RLT 204; CP 6.74

Chance [...] as an objective phenomenon, is a property of a *distribution*. That is to say, there is a large collection consisting, say, of colored things and of white things. Chance is a particular manner of distribution of color among all the things. But in order that this phrase should have any meaning, it must refer to some definite arrangement of all the things.

1902 | Possibility, Impossibility, and Possible | DPP 2:313; CP 6.366

Chance [...] has a double meaning: (i) something not derivable or explainable causally by reference to antecedent facts. There are those who assert the reality of such chance. On this view there are many *possibilities* in store in the future which no amount of knowledge would enable us to foresee or forestall. Indeterministic theories of the will assert possibilities of this sort also. (ii) Chance may mean that which, while necessary causally, is not necessary teleologically; the unplanned, the fatalistic. From this point of view the 'possible' is that which unexpectedly prevents the carrying-out of a purpose or intention.

[A] concept cognate with that of probability is the concept of “chance”; which non-pragmatists have, by very loose thinking, identified with ignorance of conditions. The pragmatist will say that it consists in a variety of results with no corresponding and definitely known variety of conditions. It is divisible into apparent, or “subjective”, chance (though the word “subjective” is objectionable,) where a variety of conditions is supposed to be known in a general way, though not singly, and real, or “objective” chance, where there is no reason to suppose any variety in the conditions.