Minneapolis
April 11 1886

My dear Henry, I do not think
you understand my position
upon the argument of design.
Firstly let us lay aside what
may be called the presump
tive argument, to wit; we know
that in our dealings with
nature intelligence produces
adaptations hence when we
meet adaptations, which are extra human
we have a presumption that
these are the results of a similar
cause. This argument must
fall before the slightest evidence
that that other causes might have
produced such results.

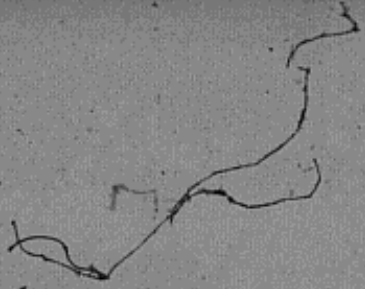
What does the argument from the dice box show?

If it proves anything, it is that the various forces which the dice are submitted to when shaken are found to follow each other in some kind of an orbit, i.e. special combinations repeat themselves often enough to bring about certain results within certain limits, so that we have only to make these limits large enough and we can attain practical certainty with regard to the occurrence of a certain fall as double sixes for instance.

All that this proves to me is, that we discover a certain law in the succession of these forces. That we can apply to this succession the term chance; which, if it means anything

~~anything~~ denominates a force without law in its activity, is to me absurd. We have done nothing but applying the fact that nature is governed by law to the effect of a series of causes to intricate to be traced out themselves. Now the argument from design takes the calculations derived from these investigations and applies them to possibility of the forces of nature producing any adaptations of similar or higher degrees of complexity. Because it is found that the forces of nature will not produce the adaptation known as double sizes but once in so often it is argued that these and other like forces could not have produced the adaptation known as the human eye, ~~[illegible]~~ being of vastly

greater complexity and occurring much more often.
Now what ever weight this argument has, is drawn from the evidence ~~of~~ attained as to our knowledge to what nature has done and so applied to other products which are not known to have been nature products alone.
If the forces of nature cannot produce an adaptation of such simple complexity as double sizes but infrequently, how could she have produced the human eye - so complex so frequent? This argument does not and cannot apply to chance for no such force exists. ~~As~~ for as it applies at all it applies to the laws



of nature, drawing conclusions as to whatever do not know from whatever do know. Is not this true? If it is the argument is puerile in its weakness. What the forces of nature can produce depends upon the circumstances under which they act. We set a stray stalk to nature and nature shedoes not accomplish it argues that what it found among her products of higher complexity could not be produced by her alone. But what parity does such an example have upon what nature can accomplish under the actions of countless ages by imperceptible changes. If this analysis of the argument

is correct no mere presence
of adaptation indicates design
Design can only come as a
second cause assigned to
an effect for which natural causes
alone have been proved insuf
ficient.

So I see no escape for the
argument from design if evo-
lution can be once established
as a universal principle
in nature. As I remember
you once said at O.; if force
acting in accordance with
law is all that is needed
for the universe the necessity
for design is immediately re-
moved. The statement that
the perfection and symmetry
of such a universe formed
by simple makes the argument
all the stronger shows that the

author of the statement does not
understand the argument.
For symmetry and perfection
can only point to an intelli
gent cause when we have
shown that they cannot
be produced by nature.
They can only indicate intelli
gence which can be shown
that existing causes are
insufficient.
Of course the circumstances
surrounding the action of
the forces of nature and those
surrounding the action of
mind and such phenomena
are not alike. And upon
such likeness must depend
all accuracy in the argu-
ment. There can be no
evidence for a final cause
until the efficient cause

has proved insufficient
to explain the phenomena
There may be sides to this argu-
ment which I do not apper-
ciate. But unless there are
I can see no strength in it.
I must go to work
I will write further upon
the other subjects later on in
the work or next.
Yours affitly
Geo.
1507 Hawthorne ave.

Minneapolis
May 2nd 56

My dear Henry,

Just a note to-day I have so much on hand that I can not send more. I have agreed to present a paper upon Hilton Selevation between the Testaments and as I of course know nothing about it I am forced to cull a great deal from other wisdom.

Regarding the certainty that stands under Kant system I am rather skeptical or perhaps I do not comprehend. What it amounts to is this as I understand it.

The system presents a perfect system of knowledge no part of which can be denied with reform

to the rest. It present to every man mind the world as he perceives it perfectly arranged according to his fundamental ideas and assures ~~it~~ him that ~~the~~ world must accord with those ideas. But he knows not at all that the seeming externality of this world is at all in accordance with the real external. By removing a real possibility of knowledge of the external (nonmena) one is presented with what is merely his sensation cast in the mold of the form of the mind called space and these thoughts cast in the molds of mind called reason

Now it seems to me that any real distinction between this and Idealism is impos

able. It does not introduce Skepticism into the system at all but it says there may not be the slightest foundation for the system itself. While the Intuitional Philosophy claims to have a solid basis which exists apart from any conception of the mind. As long as I make any real distinction between myself and nonmyself existing without me I shall not feel that I have any firm basis for a philosophy until I shall find a basis that stands under both myself and them. I may be mistaken in it but I can never satisfy myself by finding a system of abstraction and hypothesis for phenomena which do not trouble me and disturb

ding the other world of noumena as beyond my reach. Perhaps I could be satisfied if I understood Kant better or studied him under the walls and towers of German universities. If so shed light and influence upon me Henry for I want some basis, and if you really feel that you have found it I will have confidence to look for it myself, for I esteem my mind as of much the same make as yours though lacking much in power.

I must stop

Yours afftly
Geo H Mead

1507 Hawthorne Ave.

Minneapolis
May 16 1866

My dear Henry,

I am sorry to say that I kept that letter much longer than I ought to have done. I forgot it and carried it around in my pocket for over a week. I trust that your friend will notice the postmark so as not to blame you for the delay.

I am glad that you see some refreshment in the position of the Critique. I see none and I see no possibility of any except in a confident dogmatism, but I have no confidence to put in one.

If philosophy is all that he asks he ought to be abundantly satisfied with Kant. A complete philosophy however must deal with the totality of being — wh. may include more than consciousness.

A satisfactory philosophy is one which puts a rational explanation upon all that belongs to our consciousness.* But the world of noumena if such exist and their existence is only an hypothesis since the laws of cause and effect and substance and attribute are nought but forms of the mind is entirely unexplained and unexplainable from the nature of the case. It affords a tenable arrangement of the facts consciousness but all the field which those facts suggest and constantly require is left untouched. Nothing is more unsatisfactory than a system which relegates the possibility of knowledge of all outside of myself to absolute ignorance. As far as results and not definitions are

// He seems to think there is something "unsatisfactory" about Berkeley's Idealism from an "Epistemic theoretical" standpoint. There is nothing at all unsatisfactory about Berkeley's system except that the metaphysics of it is a "Sensible machine".

concerned the system is far less satisfactory than Berkeley's idealism. The system merely shuts me up in yself and gives me no opportunity of getting out. The phenomena are real, but the reality is satisfactory only as it supposes the noumena. + To resolve you eg. into a mere phenomena of whose absolute existence I have no knowledge, to make you simply an aggregate of sensations cast in the mold of my sensibility and all your thoughts but moments of my intellect cast in the mold of form of the reason is tenable but to call it satisfactory is to slap my nature flat in the face. Oppressive you will say that you exist as really as upon the dogmatic

+ not in Kant's system as he seems to be talking about since.

philosophy that the only difference that I in that case would believe in the external world immediately known as extended cannot afford any practical difference for Space is as real as a form of my mind as existing without the mind so that every thing that belongs to my conception of you exists as really as if I believed in immediate knowledge, that what gives satisfaction is not the idea of external noumena but the aggregate of sensations and conceptions that make up what I call you, and that the idea of externality belongs to the idea of space and that all my nature really demands is this idea and the idea of phenome

of the ordinary man. He appears to assume that but remove these religions and binding powers of government and society would be at once unified guarded and inspired by the sentiment of love.

Had he gone into the lower walks of life if he could not have seen it in the high and scrutinized mens natures and seen how shallow they were how utterly dependent upon the senses, how utterly unable to grasp any sentiment except whatever expressed in flesh and blood how small a part of their force of their sensibilities was in the sentiment of love how utterly incompetent

He was to govern the rest, had he once thought of the vast problems of labors and employment of the power of ambition and the gullibility of ignorant human nature had he ever thought of the sense of justice of which all that he detested in religion was but a crystallization he would not have constructed visions so puerile in their impossibility.

I suppose that poem is a record more or less of his feelings at the changes of the French Revolution. How inadequate an analysis ~~the~~ it presents of it.

Does your sister Helen come through here this summer Mrs Thompson told me that

She would, when I was in Ohio in last Christmas.
I hope that C.B. and Billy will be here for a week or two in June. I would give one finger any way to have you here.
Jim Fairchild will probably be here at the same time, so we shall have a sort of reunion.
I wish your sister were going to pass through at the same time.
Pres. Northrop has said nothing to me I do not think that that their plans are fixed yet. They are trying to get the present recumbent to stay another year.
But I do not think except upon terms which they will hand

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yacc'd to. So I have not given up hope yet. I have three charming girls whom I am instructing, I wish you could see them. Two are homely are it pretty. none are cultivated yet, but all are naturally refined. It is great fun to teach such scholars.

Well Amy, good night but not farewell. I live in the hope that some day we shall be together. Do you see Martin?

Yours affy

1557 Hawthorne Ave.

Space & Time are not the laws of my thought in particular but of thought (Comprehensive general of other subjects as well as myself, ~~He~~ which exist independently of myself (without therefore being noumena). He distorts Kant's doctrine into a system of subjective idealism or rather phenomenalism as thorough going as Wilfi or Humes.

na existing in this, that it is a shallow analysis on my part, that I am demanding what I really have, for you exist in space and are real in that space and always conform to the laws of my thought.

But all this fails to meet my analysis. As long as the possibility of noumena exist so long does the system become a mere bubble. If you could strike out the possibility of noumena If I was so satisfied that I was not necessarily running out of myself then the philosophy would meet demands. But as long as it suggest the possibility of some thing outside of myself which I cannot fathom nor try or

measure by any of my rules of thought so long must it be utterly unsatisfactory. Again in regard to skepticism it seems to me that Kants system has brought everything as we know it under the absolute rules of thought, indeed that we are sure that everything that happens in the world must happen according to these laws But this world exists only in and with us it dies with every one that dies and if the mind of any man should be changed in its constitution as it might for all our knowledge all this would be reversed and everything would happen exactly contrary to the rules of thought. As long as I exist as I am now constituted so long am I sure that

I have ~~thus~~ an absolute basis
for everything in the world.
But this is no antidote for
skepticism. I am as skeptical
as ever in regard to absolute
existence. God myself, and of
relative existence I am as ignorant
as ever. How do I know that
I am knowing? or feeling?
Kant has given me a pretty
arrangement for my blocks
he has built me a perfect and
honey faultless in relation
but I as instinctively as
ever go to the foundations
and he tells me that of real
existence I may know nothing
that all this may not absolutely
different for those differently
constituted. Now Henry
I have got to analyze a good
man keenly if I am to see

any escape from agnosticism in this. I must sit on the Princes stool with poor striped Bowen because to me Kants system induces the blankest kind of skepticism. Shed some light on my darkness if you have any for I need it.

Have you read any thing of Tolstoi's. I am going to read his "Peace and War," to a young lady here.

I have seen so much in regard to him that I am quite on the qui vive to get at it and see if he is a great word genius as is claimed for him. A curious thing is not it for a nations literature