

Association by Interest

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: Habit | RLT 236; CP 7.499

Another kind of association which is very important is that which makes an idea *interesting*. I propose to term it *association by interest*. An idea occurs to us in such a way that it would, other things being equal, be very dim. For example, it may result from a fortuitous putting together of two other ideas both of which are sunk deep in the subconscious mind. But if the new idea happens to be *interesting*, it will promptly become vivid. Why is this? Clearly it is because the objective self-consciousness, or the idea which a man has of himself, consists in large measure of what may be roughly described as a composite of ideas of his aims and purposes, including all problems which exercise him. Now the separate components of this composite may for the most part be dim; but the total idea is perhaps the most vivid in consciousness at all times. Now an interesting idea is one which has an analogy, or resemblance in form, to this composite of the man's aims. It is, therefore, drawn into vividness by the vividness of that composite.