

*The Nomenclature of the Laws of Association.*

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The Laws of Association are often distinguished by psychologists into Primary and Secondary, and the distinction is one of importance and even necessity. The primary laws are those fundamental relations, which must exist between thoughts in order to render one capable of suggesting another. The secondary laws are merely certain subordinate influences, such as the intensity or recentness of thoughts, which modify the action of the primary laws. Accordingly, when the Laws of Association are spoken of without any qualifying phrase, it is always the primary laws that are understood. It is to these laws, therefore, that the present paper refers.

Now, there are two fundamental relations by which the mutual suggestion of thoughts is determined; and, consequently, the Primary Laws of Association are, in their highest generalization, reducible to two. These may be expressed as follows:—

- I. States of mind, identical in nature, though differing in the time of their occurrence, are capable of suggesting each other;
- II. States of mind, though differing in nature, if identical in the time of their occurrence, are capable of suggesting each other.

These two laws evidently comprehend all possible cases of suggestion, as they apply both to phenomena which are identical and to those which are different in nature. The first law requires, in order to the possibility of suggestion, that there be a natural resemblance between the suggesting and the suggested states of mind. Thus when I hear a sound which I recognize as the voice of a friend, the recognition implies that the sound of the present moment suggests to me the sound of the voice heard before. Now, the two sounds are similar in their nature; they differ merely in the time of their occurrence, the one being heard now, the other having been heard on some previous occasion. The two sounds, therefore, fulfil the conditions of the first law. But the act of which we are speaking—the recognition of a particular sound as being the voice of a friend—implies something more. Not only does the present recall the former sound, but it recalls also the friend's appearance, with which that sound is associated. Now, there is no natural resemblance between a man's visual appearance and the sound of his voice, but the two have, by hypothesis, been in the mind at the same time. They, therefore, fulfil the conditions of the second law, and the one is thereby rendered capable of suggesting the other.

Such is the general purport of these laws. The nomenclature, by which they are distinguished can scarcely be said to be universally determined among psychologists. The names, Law of Similarity and Law of Contiguity, are those adopted, perhaps most commonly, in English psychological literature. At the same time these terms can scarcely