

Triadomania

1904 | Letters to Lady Welby | CP 8.328

... I was long ago (1867) led, after only three or four years' study, to throw all ideas into the three classes of Firstness, of Secondness, and of Thirdness. This sort of notion is as distasteful to me as to anybody; and for years, I endeavored to pooh-pooh and refute it; but it long ago conquered me completely. Disagreeable as it is to attribute such meaning to numbers, and to a triad above all, it is as true as it is disagreeable.

1910 | The Author's Response to the anticipated Suspicion that he attaches a superstitious or fanciful importance to the number three, and forces Divisions to a Procrustean Bed of Trichotomy | CP 1.568

I fully admit that there is a not uncommon craze for trichotomies. I do not know but the psychiatrists have provided a name for it. If not, they should. "Trichomania," [?] unfortunately, happens to be preëmpted for a totally different passion; but it might be called triadomania. I am not so afflicted; but I find myself obliged, for truth's sake, to make such a large number of trichotomies that I could not [but] wonder if my readers, especially those of them who are in the way of knowing how common the malady is, should suspect, or even opine, that I am a victim of it.