

*The Hermetic Fire of the mind  
is the key to the Occult Sciences*



Science has made wonderful discoveries on the objective side of all the physical phenomena. Where it is really wrong is, when it perceives in matter alone — i.e., in that matter which is known to it — the alpha and the omega of all phenomena. Our quarrel with the Materialists is not so much for their soulless Forces, as for their denying the existence of any “Force-bearer,” the Noumenon of Light, Electricity, etc.

## *Contents*<sup>1</sup>

### **A great light under a bushel**

What is Physiology? 3

#### **Mesmerism and Hypnotism in France**

##### **Dr. Charcot of Paris**

The Illustrious Discoverer of the “Hysterical Cock” 9

##### **Monsieur Donate and Mlle. Lucile**

Experiences in “Thought Transmission” 11

First experiment 11

Second experiment 12

Third experiment 12

Fourth experiment 12

Fifth experiment 13

Sixth and last experiment 13

### **The substantial nature of Magnetism**

#### **Alexander Nikolayevich Aksakov**

Biographical and bibliographical notes by Boris de Zirkoff 27



<sup>1</sup> Frontispiece: “Millefiori,” black ferrofluid mixed with water colours. Setup and photography by Fabian Oefner.

## A great light under a bushel

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If, according to the ironical definition of a French writer, language were not given to man “that he might the better dissimulate his thought,” at some future day, in a catechism of sciences, we might hope to see the following answer under the heading of *Physiology*.

### *What is Physiology?*

The art of denying all that its specialists have not yet come to know, and, of unconsciously disfiguring that which they do know.

The relevancy of this answer posterity will fully recognize and appreciate; especially when mesmerism, or animal magnetism, shall have become a recognized science, and generations of stubborn physicians shall have been publicly accused by history, of having sacrificed generations of their contemporary suffering millions to their ferocious conceit and obstinacy.

For those of our readers who may know but little of this most ancient science, practiced since prehistoric times in India, Egypt and Chaldea; and, who have never heard that it was the basis of the wonderful “magic art” of the Phrygian Dactyls and of the initiated priests of Memphis, we will briefly sketch its history, and show what — as now confessed by the greatest men of modern science — it is able to perform.

“ANIMAL MAGNETISM, called also mesmerism, [is] a force or fluid by means of which a peculiar influence may be exerted on the animal system,” says the *New American Cyclopaedia*. Since the destruction of the pagan temples and after an interval of several centuries, it was practiced and taught by Paracelsus, the great mystic and one of the sect of the “fire-philosophers.” Among these this force was known under the various names of “living fire,” the “Spirit of light,” etc.; the Pythagoreans called it the “Soul of the world” (*anima mundi*), and the Alchemists, “*magnes*,” and the “Celestial Virgin.” About the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Max Hell, Professor of Astronomy at Vienna, and a friend of Dr. F. Anthony Mesmer, advised him to try whether, like another Paracelsus and Kircher, he could not cure diseases with the magnet. Mesmer improved upon the idea and ended in performing the most miraculous cures — no more by mineral, but, as he claimed, by *animal* magnetism. In 1778 Mesmer went to Paris; caused in this city the greatest excitement, and from the first, firmly mastered public opinion. He would not, however, give his secret to the government, but instead of that formed a class, and nearly 4,000 persons studied under his directions at various times; Lafayette, the Marquis de Puységur, and the famous Dr. Charles d’Eslon being his pupils. His methods were not those of the present day, but he treated his patients by placing magnets on various parts of their bodies, or by having them sit



round a covered tub from the cover of which an iron rod went out to each person, the whole party thus being connected by touching hands. He also made passes with his hands over their bodies. While Mesmer, provoking in the body and limbs of the sick persons a cold prickling sensation, nervous twitchings, drowsiness, sleep, and procuring thereby an alleviation and often a total cure, did not go further than to cure nervous diseases, it was the Marquis de Puységur, his pupil, who discovered somnambulism — the most important result of animal magnetism. And it was Deleuze, the famous naturalist of the Jardin des Plantes, a man greatly respected for his probity and as an author, who published in 1813 a *Critical History of Animal Magnetism*.<sup>1</sup> At this time, notwithstanding its evident success and benefit, mesmerism had nearly lost ground. In 1784, the French Government had ordered the Medical Faculty of Paris to make an enquiry into Mesmer's practices and theory, and report. A commission was appointed of such men as the American Philosopher Franklin, Lavoisier, Bailly, and others. But, as Mesmer refused to deliver his secret and make it public, the result was that having carefully investigated the mode of treatment, the report admitted that a great influence was wrought upon the subjects, but this influence was ascribed by them *chiefly to imagination!* The impression left thereby on the public mind was that Mesmer was a charlatan, and his pupils — dupes.

Notwithstanding the general prejudice, magnetism thrived and got known over the whole world. It had made an invasion upon the grounds of medical routine and fought its way step by step. It appealed from the stubborn hostility of the Academy and the old traditions of its members to the judgment of the multitude, promising to abide by the decree of the majority. "It was in vain that its friends were treated as charlatans by the medical faculty and the majority of the learned," writes Deleuze; "the man, who had witnessed mesmeric experiments among his friends, would believe despite all the authority which could be brought to bear upon him." At last, in 1825, owing to the efforts of Dr. P.F. Foissac, a young physician of note and an enthusiastic admirer of Mesmer, the Royal Academy of Medicine in Paris appointed another learned commission and had a serious investigation made. Would anyone believe it? Owing to numerous intrigues, the opinion of the learned investigators was withheld for over five years; and it was only in 1831, that the report was rendered, and then found to the great discomfiture of the old academical and mouldy brains to contain a *unanimous* decision to the following effect:

It was reported that:

- 1 Mesmerism is a force capable of exercising a powerful influence on the human system;
- 2 This influence does not depend upon imagination;
- 3 It does not act with equal force on all persons, and upon some is entirely powerless;
- 4 It produces somnambulant sleep;

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<sup>1</sup> [The work which is meant here is *Histoire critique du magnétisme animal*, by Jean Philippe François Deleuze (Paris: Mame, 1813. 2 Vols. 8vo.). — Boris de Zirkoff.]

- 5 In this sleep injury to the nerves of sensation does not cause the slightest sense of pain;
- 6 The sleeper can hear no sound save the voice of the magnetizer;
- 7 The sleeper's nerves of touch and smell carry no sensation to the brain, unless excited by the magnetizer;
- 8 Some sleepers can see with their eyes closed, can foretell accurately, even months in advance (as was amply proved) various events, and especially the time of the return of epileptic fits, their cure, and discover the diseases of persons with whom they are placed in magnetic connection; and that persons suffering with weakness, pains, epilepsy, and paralysis, were partially or entirely cured by magnetic treatment.

The report created the greatest sensation. Mesmerism extended all over the world. Students of the new science became more numerous than ever, the ablest writers kept track of its progress and high among all others as a mesmerizer and a writer stood Baron J.D. Du Potet.<sup>1</sup> About the year 1840, Baron Karl von Reichenbach, an eminent German chemist, and the discoverer of creosote, discovered a new force, fluid, or principle — which we regard rather as one of the correlations of the *Anima Mundi* — which he called *od* or *odyle*. This agent, according to his theory,

. . . is not confined to the animal kingdom, but pervades the universe, is perceived in various ways by sensitives, has the greatest influence upon life and health, and like electricity and galvanism, has two opposite poles, and may be accumulated in, or conducted away from, animal bodies.<sup>2</sup>

Then came the discovery of Dr. Braid of Manchester, who found that he could produce sleep in patients by ordering them to look steadily at some small and brilliant object, about a foot from their eyes and above their level. He called the process *hypnotism* and gave to his theory the graceful name of *neurypnology*, setting it down as a mesmeric antidote.

Such is, in brief, the history of this wonderful principle in nature; a principle, as little understood as were electricity and galvanism in days of old. And yet while the latter, as soon as demonstrated, were unanimously accepted and even greeted, the former, however great its claims for alleviating the pains of suffering humanity, however much demonstrated, is today as bitterly denied and decried as it was in the days of Mesmer. Shall we say why? Because, while electricity and galvanism in their practical application by, and meaning in, science are the gross manifestations of the universal Proteus, the great *Anima Mundi* — Magnetism, in its broadest and most mysterious sense, discovers beyond mere physical results horizons so mysterious and vast, that the matter of fact and sceptical scientists stagger and repulse its spiritual possibilities with all the might of their narrow-minded materialism. Once that they

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<sup>1</sup> Besides many modern and very able periodicals such as the *Chaîne Magnétique* conducted under the patronage of the venerable Baron Du Potet, Honorary Fellow of our Society, at Paris, and the *Revue Magnétique*, by Donato, among the best works upon magnetism are those of H.G. Atkinson, Dr. Elliotson, and Professor William Gregory, of Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> [Reichenbach, *Researches on Magnetism*. See mainly the "Conclusions" at the end of the Seventh Treatise. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

admit its existence and give it rights of citizenship, the whole of their schools will have to be remodelled. On the other hand, the clergy are as bitter against it, for its results, in their beneficent effects, upset every necessity for believing in divine “miracles,” or fearing the diabolical, and give the lie direct to their old slanders.

We will now show the progress of magnetism under its various modern names of mesmerism, magnetism, hypnotism, and other *-isms*, among the men of science, and mesmerizers who explain it, each in his own way.

## Mesmerism and Hypnotism in France

As we propose to deal with that dangerous bugbear of physical science — mesmerism — we will have to examine these apples of discord freshly plucked by us in the garden of the scientists, with due caution and respect. We mean to cut off every possible retreat for the enemy, and will, therefore, strictly hold but to the personal experiments and explanations of some of the recognized leaders of medicine.

One such is Monsieur Naquet, deputy of Vaucluse, Professor of the Faculty of Medicine at Paris, and author of *Ancient and Modern Revelations*.<sup>1</sup> This gentleman, who is a hard-shelled materialist, to whom the mere idea of soul in man is as unwelcome as the smell of incense used to be to the traditional devil, is just now giving a series of scientific lectures in Paris, the main object of which seems to be to admit the phenomena of mesmerism (at last!) and — fight against the theory of the human soul having anything to do with them. Having successfully pulled out the props from under the ancient revelation, *i.e.*, the Bible — and demonstrated the absurdity of belief in the modern Catholic “miracles” of Lourdes and Salette — against which position we will not protest — he tries his hand at Spiritualism and Mesmerism. Unfortunately for the able lecturer he seems to labour under the impression that the votaries of both *spirit* intercourse and Mesmer must necessarily believe in Supernaturalism — hence *miracles*. Of course, he makes a mess of it. We quote, translating portions of his lectures *verbatim*:

Hand in hand with these persons [the spiritualists] who bring forward such weak arguments, we find moving, nevertheless, a few others [mesmerizers] whose ideas deserve to be taken into consideration and discussed. These pretend [?] to produce at will in some human beings a peculiar kind of sleep, called the magnetic. They affirm their ability to communicate to certain subjects the faculty of seeing through opaque bodies, and they maintain that such facts remain unexplainable unless we admit the existence of a soul in man.

To begin with: are the facts from which these men draw their conclusions at all certain?<sup>2</sup> Admitting that they are, cannot they be explained upon any other hypothesis than the existence of this Soul?

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<sup>1</sup> *Révélation Antique et Révélation Moderne*

<sup>2</sup> At the time of this lecture the eminent physician believed but little in the mesmeric phenomena. Since then, having repeatedly witnessed experiments of animal magnetism by Professor Charcot, he doubts no longer; nay — he believes, and yet, while finding it impossible to doubt, he tries to explain the whole upon his own materialistic hypothesis. — ED., *Theosophist*. [H.P. Blavatsky]

The facts under consideration are affirmed by enlightened and honourable men; thus, in this case, they do not offer *that startling character of imbecility and imposture which constitutes the fundamental feature of Spiritualism.*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I will not immediately pronounce upon the unreality of all they tell us of magnetism; but, at the same time I propose to show that these facts, however real, do not in the least prove any necessity for the intervention of a soul to account for them.

Magnetic sleep can be explained quite naturally. The phenomena of electric attraction daily produced before our very eyes, and which no one ever attempted to attribute to a supernatural cause, are at least as extraordinary as the mesmeric influence of one man upon another man. For the last several years, sleep, followed by complete insensibility and identical in all points with the magnetic sleep, is produced by purely mechanical means. To obtain it, one has but to approach a light to the patient's nose. The fixing of his eyes upon the luminous point produces a cerebral fatigue which results in sleep. At this day, it is no longer to be doubted that magnetism belongs to a phenomenon of the same kind, light being replaced by other agents and expedients which bring on the same cerebral fatigue, and finally sleep.

Lucidity seems more doubtful than simple magnetic sleep, and it becomes still more difficult to give it credence. Admitting it to be demonstrated, however, we could again explain it without meddling with the *Spirit*.

We will know that light and heat are but vibratory motions; that light and heat differ but in the length of their undulations; that these undulations which are perceptible to our eye, are of various lengths, producing in us the sensation of various colours; that moreover among the undulatory motions, which we recognize as heat, there are waves of different lengths; that there exists, in short, such a thing as a real calorific *spectrum*. On the other hand, as, beyond the red ray, there are motions which remain unperceivable by the eye, but which become sensible to the touch as heat, so there are others beyond the violet ray, which develop in us neither impressions of heat nor those of luminosity, but which we can make manifest by the chemical influence which they exercise upon certain substances. Finally, experiment shows to us that there are bodies permeable to heat, yet perfectly impermeable to light, and *vice versa*.

Thus, we can admit the production of vibrations or waves of various lengths and infinitely variable. But of all such possible motions there is but a certain number only, within very restricted limits, that are perceived by us as light, heat, or chemical rays. All greater and smaller motions escape our senses, as would the luminous motions, had we no organ of sight. They escape us simply because we have no organs fit to perceive them.

Let us now suppose that, owing to a nervous sur-excitement, our organs may become impressionable to the extra-calorific or extra-luminous rays. THE FACTS OF MAGNETIC LUCIDITY WOULD BE PERFECTLY EXPLAINED.

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<sup>1</sup> More than one spiritualist might return the compliment to materialism and with usury. — ED., *Theosophist*. [H.P. Blavatsky]

We thank modern Science for teaching us such truths and explaining such a profoundly involved problem. But we can hardly refrain from reminding the erudite lecturer that he but repeats that which was explained by nearly every ancient philosopher and repeated by many a modern writer, who has treated upon clairvoyance.

The Neo-Platonists explained clairvoyance on the same principle; Baptiste van Helmont in his *Opera Omnia*, A.D. 1652,<sup>1</sup> treats this second sight in the realm of the occult universe most elaborately. The Hindu Yogi reaches clairvoyance by purely physiological processes, which does not prevent him from often discerning things *real*, not *imaginary*. Our wise lecturer goes on to say:

Light, heat, and chemical rays are propagated by means of vibrations, and according to the same law; thus, must it be for the rays which remain imperceptible to our senses. Let only our eyes become fit for perceiving them, and the 'double sight' has nothing in it to surprise us. . . . *The day when these facts [of mesmerism] shall be sufficiently proved, our hypothesis will become more acceptable than that of the soul. It will allow of every explanation, without trespassing beyond the laws which govern the universe.*

We make haste to deny and emphatically protest against the imputation of believing in the supernatural. The hypothesis of Monsieur Naquet, the physiologist, if ever accepted, beyond the small minority of his colleagues, will never prove "acceptable." As to accusing, as he does, the vast body of Spiritualists, Spiritists, and Mesmerists of trespassing in their explanation *beyond the laws which govern the universe*, it is as false as it is ridiculous. Once more it shows how apt are our opponents, and especially physiologists, to disfigure facts whenever these clash with their ideas. Their arguments were unique. If, said they, artificial sleep can be produced by purely *mechanical* means (hypnotism), what use is there in calling *spirit* and *soul* to our help to explain this phenomenon? No use whatever, indeed. But neither did we ever pretend to explain this preliminary stage to clairvoyance-sleep whether natural, hypnotic, or mesmeric, by any soul or spirit theory. This imputation lies only in the case of uneducated Spiritualists, who attribute all such phenomena to "disembodied spirits." But can they themselves — these high priests of intellect — the agency of the spiritual *ego* being put aside — any more rationally explain the phenomenon of somnambulism, clairvoyance (which some of them as we see are forced to admit) or even sleep and simple dreams, than we, not "scientifically trained" mortals? Even ordinary sleep with its infinite modifications is as good as unknown to physiology. Admitting even that the *will of man* is not the direct cause of magnetic effects, it yet, as Monsieur Donato, the celebrated magnetizer of Paris, remarks, "plays upon and guides many a mysterious force in nature, the mere existence of which is totally unknown to science."

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<sup>1</sup> p. 720



## Dr. Charcot of Paris

### The Illustrious Discoverer of the “Hysterical Cock”

Meanwhile science fishes in the same water with the mesmerizers and for the same fish — only inventing for it, when caught, a new, and as it thinks, a more scientific name. The above accusation is easily demonstrated. As a proof, we may cite the case of Dr. Charcot. It is the same great Parisian professor who, having proved to his own satisfaction that no mesmeric effects can be obtained with a subject unless this subject be naturally hysterical, mesmerized a rooster and thus became the original discoverer of the “Hysterical Cock.”<sup>1</sup> Professor Charcot is an authority upon all manner of nervous diseases, a high rival of Broca, Vulpian, Luys, *etc.*, and besides being the celebrated physician of the hospitals of Paris, is a member of the Academy of Medicine. Like the less scientific but equally famous Dr. W.A. Hammond, of New York, he believes in the efficacy of the metallic discs of Dr. Bürck for curing more than one incurable disease, but unlike that neurologist, does not attribute any of either the cures or other phenomena to imagination; for catalepsy can be practiced upon animals, according to his own experiments. He also gives credit in his own way to the genuineness of somnambulism and the freaks of catalepsy, attributing to the latter all mediumistic phenomena. On the authority of a correspondent of Mr. Ragazzi, the Editor of the *Journal du Magnétisme* of Geneva, he proceeds in the following fashion:

Dr. Charcot first introduces to his audience at the hospital of *La Salpêtrière*, Paris, a sick girl in a state of perfect insensibility. Pins and needles are stuck in her head and body without the least effect. An application of a collar of zinc discs for five minutes returns life into the regions of the throat. Then the two poles of a horseshoe magnet are applied to her left arm and that spot exhibits sensibility, while the rest of the body remains in its previous state. The same magnet, placed in contact with the leg, instead of bringing the limb back to life, produces a violent contraction of the foot, drawing the toes to the heel; it ceases but upon an application of electricity.

“These experiments of *metallotherapia* and mineral magnetism remind one of the gropings of Mesmer in 1774, and of his applications of magnetized pieces in the case of nervous diseases,” says Mr. Pony, the medical student, in his letter to the *Journal du Magnétisme*, and an eye-witness.

Another subject is brought. She is hysterical like the first one, and appears in a state of complete anaesthesia. A strong ray of electric light is directed on her, and the patient is instantaneously cataleptized. She is made to assume the most unnatural positions; and, according to the attitude *commanded*, have her countenance “by suggestion,” says Dr. Charcot, “express that which her gestures imply. Thus her hands, crossed on her bosom, are followed by an expression of ecstasy on her face; her arms, stretched forward, produce in her features an air of supplication. . . .”

If, while the *subject* is in this state, the luminous ray is abruptly withdrawn, the patient collapses and falls again into *somnambulism* — a word which shocks Professor Charcot beyond description. At the command of the physician, and while he proves her utter insensibility by sticking pins in every portion of her body, the patient is

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<sup>1</sup> See *Revue Magnétique* for February, 1879, edited by Donato at Paris.

made to obey the doctor at every word of command. He forces her to rise, to walk, to write, *etc.*

In a letter from Mr. Aksakoff, which is published further on, it will be seen that Donato, the professional magnetizer produces by *will power* all that is produced by the sceptical *savant* by electricity and *mechanical* means. Does the latter experiment prove that mesmerism is but a name? Can we not, rather, see in both a mutual corroboration; a proof, moreover, of the presence in man's system of all those subtle powers of nature, the grosser manifestations of which are only known to us as electricity and magnetism, and the finer escaping entirely the scrutiny of physical science?

But one of the most curious features of the phenomenon, brought on by Dr. Charcot's experiments, is to be found in the effect produced on his patients by vibrations like those felt on a railway train. Upon perceiving it, the illustrious professor had a huge diapason, 40 centimetres high, placed upon a large chest. As soon as this instrument is made to vibrate, the patients at once fall into catalepsy; and whenever the vibrations are abruptly stopped, the patients sink into complete somnambulism.

It would seem, then, that Dr. Charcot, in order to produce the above described effects, uses but two agents — *sound* and *light*. Thus, this assurance may become of an immense importance to all the Aryan students of Theosophy, especially to those who study the Sanskrit, and who, thanks to Swami Dayānanda, are now enabled to learn the real and spiritual meaning of certain disputed words. Those of our Fellows who have mastered the occult significance of the words *Vāch* and *Hiranyagarbha*<sup>1</sup> in their application to “sound” and “light” will have in the above an additional proof of the great wisdom of their forefathers, and the profound and spiritual knowledge contained in the *Vedas*, and even in other sacred Brāhmanical books, when properly interpreted.

In considering the phenomena produced by Dr. Charcot, the cold materialist and man of science, it is highly interesting to read a letter on his own personal experiences in magnetism, with the famous magnetizer, Mr. Donato, of Paris, by Alexandre Aksakoff, F.T.S., Russian Imperial Councillor, which was recently addressed by him to a French journal. The results obtained are all the more worthy of notice from the fact that Mr. Donato had not previously attempted the so-called “transmission of thought” from one person to another by the mere will of the magnetizer and felt and expressed considerable doubt as to the success of his efforts in that direction.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Professor Max Müller as “gold,” whereas it really means “divine light,” in the exact sense understood by the mediaeval alchemists. In his Sanskrit work, *Sāhitya Grantha*, the learned philologist, on the ground that the word “gold,” *Hiranya*, is found in the Mantra *Agnihī Poorvebhihi*, takes the opportunity of going against the antiquity of the *Vedas*, and to prove that they are not as old as commonly thought, since the exploration of gold-mines is of comparatively modern date. In his turn, Swami Dayānanda Sarasvatī shows in his *Rig-vedādi-Bhāshya Bhūmika*, Book IV, p. 76, that the Professor is entirely wrong. The word *Hiranya* does not mean “gold” but the golden light of divine knowledge, the first principle in whose womb is contained the light of the eternal truth which illuminates the liberated soul when it has reached its highest abode. It is, in short, the “Philosopher's Stone” of the alchemist, and the Eternal Light of the Fire Philosopher. — ED., *Theosophist*. [H.P. Blavatsky]

[*Agnihī pūrvebhih* are the first two words from the second verse of the Hymn to Agni, *Rigveda* i, 1. In pronouncing, *h* carries over vowel preceding it. The Sanskrit work referred to is the Hindi Introduction to Swāmi Dayānanda's *Rigveda-bhāshya*. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

Two French papers, the *Rappel* and the *Voltaire*, have borne flattering testimony to the character and attainments of Mr. Donato, and he is generally known as one of those men who have dared to quit the ruts traced by habit and tradition, and investigate, to quote his own words,

. . . the occult motor which animates us, the mysterious forces which create life, the bonds that unite us to one another, our mutual affinities, and our connection with the supreme power, the eternal lever of the world.

So much for Mr. Donato. As to Aksakoff, he is a highly intelligent and truthful gentleman; reputed to be, in his earnest researches in the domain of magnetism and psychology not only a cautious investigator, but rather of a too distrustful nature. We here give the *verbatim* translation of his article published by him in *La Revue Magnétique*, of February, 1879.

## Monsieur Donate and Mlle. Lucile

### Experiences in “Thought Transmission” by Alexander Aksakoff<sup>1</sup>

Having had the pleasure of making, at Paris, the acquaintance of Mr. Donato and of his amiable and excellent pupil, I did not wish to lose the opportunity of attempting an experiment, under my own direction, to ascertain the possibility of transmitting thought from one human being to another by the vehicle of the will alone. It is known that one of the most ordinary aphorisms of modern psychology is:

Psychological activity cannot go beyond the periphery of the nerves.

If then it can be proved that human thought is not limited to the domain of the body, but that it can act at a distance upon another human body, transmit itself to another brain without visible and recognised communication, and be reproduced by word, movement, or any other means, we obtain an immense fact before which material physiology should bow down, and which should be seized by psychology and philosophy to give a new support and a new development to their metaphysical speculations. This fact has in many ways and under many forms been proved by animal magnetism; but in the experiments which I planned, I wished to see it presented in a form at once convincing and easy to reproduce by any person acquainted with magnetism.

When I asked Mr. Donato if he would accord me a private interview for certain experiments which I had in view, he consented willingly and promised to hold himself at my service for the day and hour I should indicate. So, having announced myself by a telegram, I went to his house on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November at two o'clock, and after a few minutes' conversation, we began our work.

**First experiment** — I begged Mr. Donato to commence by putting to sleep his subject, Mlle. Lucile, and he at once placed an armchair between the two windows of the room and a few paces from the wall; in it Mlle. Lucile seated herself,

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<sup>1</sup> St. Petersburg, Nevsky Prospect, No. 6, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1879. [See Alexander Nikolayevich Aksakoff's biographical and bibliographical notes, prepared by Boris de Zirkoff at the end of this document. — ED. PHIL.]

and slept (magnetically) in a few moments. We took our places at the other end of the room, opposite the sleeper, and I then drew from my pocket a card-case from which I took a card and handed it to Mr. Donato, begging him, simply by looking at Mlle. Lucile, to induce her to make the movement indicated on the card. On it was written "Extend the left arm." Mr. Donato rose, remained motionless near me, and looked at Mlle. Lucile; after an instant her left arm began to move, slowly extended itself, and remained in that position until Mr. Donato replaced it by her side.

**Second experiment** — I passed to Mr. Donato a white handkerchief which I had brought with me, and begged him to cover with it the face and head of Mlle. Lucile. This being done, and the edges of the handkerchief falling on her shoulders, we took our places again, and in silence I gave to Mr. Donato a second card on which was written, "Raise the right arm vertically." Mr. Donato fixed his eyes on the motionless body of Mlle. Lucile and soon her right arm, obedient to the thought which directed it, executed the movement indicated — slowly, gently, stopping always when Mr. Donato turned his head to look at me. I felicitated him on his success and begged him that all danger of overfatigue might be avoided, to remove the handkerchief and awake Mlle. Lucile.

**Third experiment** — After ten minutes of conversation, Mlle. Lucile is again asleep, and her head covered by the handkerchief; we resume our places, and I pass to Mr. Donato a third card bearing the words, "Put both hands upon your head," and I asked Mr. Donato to stand this time behind Mlle. Lucile. He expresses some doubt as to the possibility of success in this position, but makes the attempt and fails; a fact which did not surprise me, as the polaric connection between the operator and his subject was reversed. At this moment I approached Mr. Donato and a remarkable phenomenon was produced. As I wished to ask the magnetizer to concentrate his will on the occiput of the sleeper, my hand made an involuntary movement towards her back to indicate the place named, and while it was still some inches distant, Mlle. Lucile moved suddenly forward. Thus I obtained in an unexpected and conclusive manner the confirmation of the phenomenon of polarity, or of attraction and repulsion, which I had already observed at the public representations, and which proves very clearly that the sleep of Mlle. Lucile was neither natural nor feigned. "If you will allow me to use my hands," said Mr. Donato, "I am sure to succeed."

"Use them," I said, and, still behind Mlle. Lucile, he made a few passes from the shoulders to the elbows, when the hands of the subject rising slowly placed themselves upon her head.

**Fourth experiment** — Mlle. Lucile still remaining asleep with her head under the handkerchief, I give to Mr. Donato a card on which was written, "Join the hands as if praying," and I place myself on a sofa to the left of Mlle. Lucile, the better to observe the movements of Mr. Donato. He remains motionless at five or six paces from her and looks at her fixedly; her hands take the desired position and retain it until Mr. Donato removes the handkerchief and awakes her.



**Fifth experiment** — After ten minutes' rest, Mlle. Lucile goes back to the armchair and is again put to sleep. The fifth card orders her to make a knot with the handkerchief, and Mr. Donato, placing himself behind Mlle. Lucile, extends his hand over her head without touching her. She rises and he directs her by his thought towards the table on which the handkerchief has, unknown to her, been placed. Obeying the attraction of the hand, she reaches the table, Mr. Donato still keeping the same position behind her, and I standing near him. With growing interest we watch her movements, and see her hand seize the handkerchief, draw out one of its ends, and tie a knot. Mr. Donato himself was astonished, for this time it was no longer a simple exercise of will, but a thought transmitted and executed!

**Sixth and last experiment** — It was almost useless to continue, but as Mr. Donato insisted, I handed him another card with the following inscription, "Touch your left ear with your right hand." Mlle. Lucile still asleep was already back in her armchair; Mr. Donato stood in front of her, and I occupied my former place on the sofa. Motionless and silent, the magnetizer looked at his subject, whose right arm soon executed the order given, by three successive movements, the hand approaching the breast, and then the ear, which it finally touched.

These experiments were for me perfectly conclusive; Mlle. Lucile executed the movements desired without the least hesitation. The thoughts that Mr. Donato was to transmit to her were indicated to him by me only by cards prepared in advance, and in most cases he acted on her from a distance which rendered any conventional sign or signal difficult, even if her face had not been covered with a handkerchief, which I had ascertained was thick enough to hide from her any slight sign given by the hands or face of Mr. Donato; besides which it would have required a very complicated system of minute telegraphy to indicate the movements required.

I asked Mr. Donato if he had ever attempted to produce anything of the kind in public, and he answered that these experiments exacted very harmonious conditions, difficult to obtain in large assemblies, and that he did not like to risk a failure. I think if Mr. Donato would exercise his pupil oftener in this direction, he would finish by producing a series of public phenomena of this kind with the same ease with which he produces the others. It would be well worth the trouble, for none can deny that these experiments illustrate especially the phenomena of lucidity and clairvoyance, and present them in their simplest and clearest form.

As I left Paris the day after our interview, I could only express my satisfaction to Mr. Donato by a little note which was printed in No. 16 of *La Revue*. It is with great pleasure that I now fulfil my promise to publish all the details of our experiments, and I profit by this opportunity to signify publicly to Mr. Donato my high appreciation of the zeal, knowledge, and loyalty with which he devotes himself to the defence and promulgation of the most interesting science of human magnetism.

## The substantial nature of Magnetism

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. IX, No. 49, September 1891, pp. 8-20; republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE SUBSTANTIAL NATURE OF MAGNETISM) VIII pp. 315-33.

[As is obvious from the above reference, this very valuable essay from the pen of H.P. Blavatsky was published posthumously. The actual time when it was written cannot be determined at present with any degree of accuracy, especially as the text contains no very definite clues to this effect. The same applies to the essay entitled: "Psychology, The Science of the Soul," which is made to follow the present one. These two essays are definitely inter-related, and have at least one passage in common. It is very probable that they were written at approximately the same period. While no definite date is known, it can, nevertheless, be stated that the present essay was written later than January 1887, because it quotes from T. Subba Row's lecture on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, delivered at the Adyar Convention in December, 1886; it is, of course, quite possible that the essay was not written until after the launching of *Lucifer* in September 1887. It is, however, very doubtful that it would have been written after the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, in the Fall of 1888, because it mentions the Section on the "Monads, Gods, and Atoms," in that work, and refers to it as being in Volume I, Book II, while this Section is to be found in Vol. I, Book I, Part III, of the final text of the work. It is, therefore, very likely that this essay was penned before the final version of H.P. Blavatsky's monumental *opus* had been fully drawn up.

The same line of reasoning applies to the essay on Psychology, which follows the present one. It may be that both essays were intended for *The Theosophist* but were laid aside for one reason or another and not submitted.

It seems, therefore, plausible to publish both of these essays at the end of the year 1887, as a mean value in time, fairly closely approximating the probable period at which they were written. — *Boris de Zirkoff.*]

Materialists who arraign the Occultists and Theosophists for believing that every Force (so called) in Nature has at its origin a substantial NOUMENON, an Entity, conscious and intelligent, whether it be a Planetary (Dhyāni-Chohan) or an Elemental, are advised to fix their attention, first of all, on a far more dangerous body than the one called the Theosophical Society. We mean the Society in the U.S. of America whose members call themselves the Substantialists. We call it *dangerous* for this reason, that this body, combining in itself dogmatic Church Christianity, *i.e.*, the anthropomorphic element of the Bible — with sterling Science, makes, nevertheless, the latter subservient in all to the former. This is equivalent to saying, that the new organization, will, in its fanatical dogmatism — if it wins the day — lead on the forthcoming generations to anthropomorphism past redemption. It will achieve this the more easily in our age of Science-worship, since a show of undeniable learning must help to impart additional strength to belief in a gigantic human god, as their hypotheses, like those of modern materialistic science, may be easily built to answer their particular aim. The educated and thoughtful classes of Society, once set free from ecclesiastical thralldom, could laugh at a St. Augustine's or a "venerable" Bede's scientific data, which led them to maintain on the authority and dead letter of what they regarded as Revelation that our Earth, instead of being a sphere, was flat, hanging under a crystalline canopy studded with shining brass nails and a sun no larger than it appears. But the same classes will be always forced by public opinion into respecting the hypotheses of modern Science — in whatever direction the nature of scientific speculation may lead them. They have been so led for the last century — into crass Materialism; they may be so led again in an opposite direction. The cycle

has closed, and if Science ever falls into the hands of the Opposition — the learned “Reverends” and bigoted Churchmen — the world may find itself gradually approaching the ditch on the opposite side and be landed at no distant future in crass anthropomorphism. Once more the masses will have rejected true philosophy — impartial and unsectarian — and will thus be caught again in new meshes of their own weaving, the fruitage and results of the reaction created by an all-denying age. The solemn ideal of a universal, infinite, all-pervading Noumenon of Spirit, of an impersonal and *absolute* Deity, will fade out of the human mind once more, and will make room for the MONSTER-GOD of sectarian nightmares.

Now, modern official science is composed — as at present — of 5 per cent. of undeniable axiomatic truths and facts, and of 95 per cent. of mere speculation. Furthermore, it has laid itself open to endless attacks, owing to its numerous mutually contradictory hypotheses, each one as scientific, in appearance, as the other. On the other hand, the Substantialists, who rank, as they boast, among their numbers some of the most eminent men of Science in the United States, have undeniably discovered and accumulated a vast store of facts calculated to upset the modern theories on Force and Matter. And once that their data are shown correct, in this conflict between (materialistic) Science and (a still more materialistic) Religion — the outcome of the forthcoming battle is not difficult to foresee: modern Science will be flooded. The Substantiality of certain Forces of Nature cannot be denied — for it is a fact in Kosmos. No Energy or Force without Matter, no Matter without Force, Energy or *Life* — however latent. But this *ultimate* Matter is — Substance or the *Noumenon* of matter. Thus, the head of the golden Idol of scientific truth will fall, because it stands on feet of clay. Such a result would not be anything to be regretted, except for its immediate consequences: the golden Head will remain the same, only its pedestal will be replaced by one as weak and as much of *clay* as ever. Instead of resting on Materialism, science will rest on anthropomorphic superstition — if the Substantialists ever gain the day. For, instead of holding to philosophy alone, pursued in a spirit of absolute impartiality, both materialists and adherents of what is so pompously called the “Philosophy of Substantialism” work on lines traced by preconception and with a prejudged object; and both stretch their facts on the procrustean beds of their respective hobbies. It is *facts* that have to fit their theories, even at the risk of mutilating the immaculate nature of Truth.

Before presenting the reader with extracts from the work of a Substantialist — those extracts showing better than would any critical review, the true nature of the claims of “The Substantial Philosophy” — we mean to go no further, as we are really very little concerned with them, and intend to waste no words over their flaws and pretensions. Nevertheless, as their ideas on the nature of physical Forces and phenomena are curiously — *in some respects only* — like the occult doctrines, our intention is to *utilize* their arguments — on Magnetism, to begin with. These are *unanswerable*, and we may thus defeat exact science by its own methods of observation and weapons. So far, we are only acquainted with the theories of the Substantialists by their writings. It is possible that, save the wide divergence between our views on the *nature* of the “phenomena-producing causes” — as they queerly call physical forces — there is but little difference in our opinions with regard to the substantial nature of Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, *etc., etc.*, perhaps only one in the form and terms used.

No Theosophist, however, would agree to such expressions as are used in the New Doctrine: *e.g.*, “If its principles be true, then every force or form of Energy known to science *must be a substantial Entity.*” For although Dr. Hall’s proofs with regard to magnetic fluid being something more than “a mode of motion” are *irrefutable*, still there are other “forces” which are of quite a different nature. As this paper, however, is devoted to prove the substantiality of magnetism — whether animal or physical — we will now quote from the *Scientific Arena* the best arguments that have ever appeared against the materialistic theory of modern Science.

To admit for one moment that a single force of nature, such as *sound, light, or heat*, is but the vibratory motion of matter, whether that material body be highly attenuated as in the case of the supposed *ether*, less attenuated as in the case of air, or solid as in the case of a heated bar of iron, is to give away to the rank claims of materialism the entire analogy of nature and science in favour of a future life for humanity. And well do the materialistic scientists of this country and Europe know it. And to the same extent do they fear the spread and general acceptance of the Substantial Philosophy, knowing full well that the moment the forces of nature shall be recognised and taught by the schools of this land as real substantial entities, and as soon as the mode-of-motion doctrines of sound, light, heat, *etc.*, shall be abandoned, that soon will their materialistic occupation have gone for ever . . .

Hence, it is the aim of this present paper, after thus reiterating and enforcing the general scope of the argument as presented last month, to demonstrate force, *per se*, to be an immaterial substance, and in no sense a motion of material particles. In this way we purpose to show the absolute necessity for Christian scientists everywhere adopting the broad principles of the Substantial Philosophy, and doing it at once, if they hope to break down materialistic atheism in this land or logically to defend religion by scientific analogy, and thus prove the substantial existence of God as well as the probable substantial existence of the human soul after death. This they now have the privilege of doing successfully, and of thus triumphantly re-enforcing their scriptural arguments by the concurrent testimony of nature herself.

We could select any one of several of the physical forms of force as the crucial test of the new philosophy, or as the touch-stone of Substantialism. But to save circumlocution and detail of unnecessary explanation as much as possible, in this leading and paramount demonstration, we select what no scientist on earth will question as a representative natural force or so-called form of energy — namely, *magnetism*. This force, from the very simple and direct manifestation of its phenomena in displacing ponderable bodies at a distance from the magnet, and without having any tangible substance connecting the magnet therewith, is selected for our purpose, since it has well proved the champion physical puzzle to modern mode-of-motion philosophers, both in this country and in Europe.

Even to the greatest living physicists, such as Helmholtz, Tyndall, Sir William Thomson, and others, the mysterious action of magnetism, under any light which modern science can shed upon it, admittedly affords a problem which



has proved to be completely bewildering to their intellects, simply because they have unfortunately never caught a glimpse of the basic principles of the Substantial Philosophy which so clearly unravels the mystery. In the light of these principles such a thinker as Sir William Thomson, instead of teaching, as he did in his opening address on the five senses before the Midland Institute, at Birmingham, England, that magnetism was but the molecular motion, or as he expressed it, but the “quality of matter,” of the “rotation of the molecules” of the magnet, would have seen at a glance the utter want of any relation, as cause to effect, between such moving molecules in the magnet (provided they do move), and the lifting of the mass of iron at a distance.

It is passing strange that men so intelligent as Sir William Thomson and Prof. Tyndall had not long ago reached the conclusion that magnetism must of necessity be a substantial thing, however invisible or intangible, when it thus stretches out its mechanical but invisible fingers to a distance from the magnet and pulls or pushes an inert piece of metal! That they have not seen the absolute necessity for such a conclusion, as the only conceivable explanation of the mechanical effects produced, and the manifest inconsistency of any other supposition, is one of the astounding results of the confusing and blinding influence of the present false theories of science upon otherwise logical and profound intellects. And that such men could be satisfied in supposing that the minute and local vibrations of the molecules and atoms of the magnet (necessarily limited to the dimensions of the steel itself) could by any possibility reach out to a distance beyond it and thus pull or push a bar of metal, overcoming its inertia, tempts one to lose all respect for the sagacity and profundity of the intellects of these great names in science. At all events, such manifest want of perspicacity in modern physicists appeals in a warning voice of thunder tones to rising young men of this country and Europe to think for themselves in matters pertaining to science and philosophy, and to accept nothing on trust simply because it happens to be set forth or approved by some great name.

Another most remarkable anomaly in the case of the physicists to whom we have here referred is this: while failing to see the unavoidable necessity of an actual substance of some kind going forth from the poles of the magnet and connecting with the piece of iron by which to lift it and thus accomplish a physical result, that could have been effected in no other way, they are quick to accept the agency of an all-pervading *ether* (a substance not needed at all in nature) by which to produce *light* on this earth as mere *motion*, and thus make it conform to the supposed sound-waves in the air! In this way, by the sheer invention of a not-needed material substance, they have sought to convert not only light, heat, and magnetism, but all the other forces of nature into modes of motion, *and for no reason except that sound had been mistaken as a mode of motion by previous scientists*. And strange to state, notwithstanding this supposed *ether* is as intangible to any of our senses, and just as unrecognisable by any process known to chemistry or mechanics as is the substance which of necessity must pass out from the poles of the magnet to seize and lift the bar of iron, yet physicists cheerfully accept the former, for which no scientific necessity on earth or in heaven exists, while they stolidly refuse to recognise the latter,

though absolutely needed to accomplish the results observed! Was ever such inconsistency before witnessed in a scientific theory?

Let us scrutinize this matter a little further before leaving it. If the mere “rotation of molecules” in the steel magnet can produce a mechanical effect on a piece of iron at a distance, even through a vacuum, as Sir William Thomson asserts, why may not the rotation of the molecules of the sun cause light at a distance without the intervening space being filled up with a jelly-like material substance of “enormous rigidity,” to be thrown into waves? It must strike every mind capable of thinking scientifically that the original invention of an all-pervading “material,” “rigid” and “inert” ether, as the essential cause of light at a distance from a luminous body, was one of the most useless expenditures of mechanical ingenuity which the human brain ever perpetrated — that is, if there is the slightest truth in the teaching of Sir William Thomson that the mere “rotation of molecules” in the magnet will lift a distant bar of iron. Why cannot the rotation of the sun’s molecules just as easily produce light at a distance?

Should it be assumed in sheer desperation by the mode-of-motion philosophers that it is the *ether*, filling the space between the magnet and the piece of iron, which is thrown into vibration by the rotating molecules of the steel, and which thus lifts the distant iron, it would only be to make bad worse. If material vibration in the steel magnet, which is wholly unobservable, is communicated to the distant bar through a material substance and its vibratory motions, which are equally unobservable, is it not plain that their effects on the distant bar should be of the same mechanical character, namely, unobservable? Instead of this the iron is lifted bodily and seen plainly, and that without any observed tremor, as if done by a vibrating “jelly” such as ether is claimed to be! Besides, such bodily lifting of a ponderable mass is utterly incongruous with mere tremor, however powerful and observable such tremor or vibration might be, according to every principle known to mechanics. Common sense ought to assure any man that mere vibration or tremor, however powerful and sensible, can pull or push nothing. It is impossible to conceive of the accomplishment of such a result except by some substantial agent reaching out from the magnet, seizing the iron, and forcibly pulling and thus displacing it. As well talk of pulling a boat to the shore without some rope or other substantial thing connecting you with the boat. Even Sir William Thomson would not claim that the boat could be pulled by getting up a molecular vibration of the shore, or even by producing a visible tremor in the water, as Dr. Hamlin so logically showed in his recent masterly paper on *Force*.

It is well known that a magnet will lift a piece of iron at the same distance precisely through sheets of glass as if no glass intervened. The confirmed atheist Mr. Smith, of Cincinnati, Ohio, to whom we referred in our papers on Substantialism, in *The Microcosm*, was utterly confounded by this exhibition of the substantial force of magnetism acting at a distance through impervious plates of glass. When we placed a quantity of needles and tacks on the plate and passed the poles of the magnet beneath it, causing them to move with the magnet, he

saw for the first time in his life the operation of a real substance, exerting a mechanical effect in displacing ponderable bodies of metal in defiance of all material conditions, and with no possible material connection or free passage between the source and termination of such substantial agency. And he asked in exclamation, if this be so, may there not be a substantial, intelligent, and immaterial God, and may I not have a substantial but immaterial soul which can live separately from my body after it is dead ?

He then raised the query, asking if we were certain that it was not the invisible pores of the glass plate through which the magnetic force found its way, and therefore whether this force might not be a refined form of matter after all? He even assisted us in filling the plate with boiled water, on which to float a card with needles placed thereon, thus to interpose between them and the magnet the most imporous of all known bodies. But it made not the slightest difference, the card with its cargo of needles moving hither and thither as the magnet was moved beneath both plate and water. This was sufficient even for that most critical but candid materialist, and he confessed that there were substantial but immaterial entities in heaven and earth never dreamt of in his atheistic philosophy.

Here, then, is the conclusive argument by which we demonstrate that magnetism, one of the forces of nature, and a fair representative of all the natural forces, is not only a real, *substantial* entity, but an absolutely *immaterial* substance;<sup>1</sup> thus justifying our original classification of the entities of the universe into material and immaterial substances.

1. If magnetism were not a real substance, it could not lift a piece of metal bodily at a distance from the magnet, any more than our hand could lift a weight from the floor without some substantial connection between the two. It is a self-evident truism as an axiom in mechanics, that no body can move or displace another body at a distance without a real, substantial medium connecting the two through which the result is accomplished, otherwise it would be a mechanical effect without a cause — a self-evident absurdity in philosophy. Hence, the force of magnetism is a real, substantial entity.

2. If magnetism were not an *immaterial* substance, then any practically imporous body intervening between the magnet and the attracted object would, to some extent at least, impede the passage of the magnetic current, which it does not do. If magnetism were a very refined or attenuated form of matter, and if it thus depended for its passage through other material bodies upon their imperceptible pores, then, manifestly, some difference in the freedom of its passage, and in the consequent attractive force of the distant magnet should result by great difference in the porosity of the different bodies tested, as would be the case, for example, in forcing wind through wire-netting having larger or smaller interstices, and consequently offering greater or less resistance. Whereas, in the case of this magnetic substance, no difference whatever results in the energy of its mechanical pull on a distant piece of iron, however many or few of the prac-

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<sup>1</sup> This is a very wrong word to use. See text. — H.P. Blavatsky

tically imporous sheets of glass, rubber, or whatever other material body be made to intervene, or if no substance whatever but the air is interposed, or if the test be made in a perfect vacuum. The pull is always with precisely the same force, and will move the suspended piece of iron at the same distance away from it in each and every case, however refined and delicate may be the instruments by which the tests are measured.

The above quoted passages are positively unanswerable. As far as magnetic force, or fluid, is concerned the Substantialists have most undeniably made out their case; and their triumph will be hailed with joy by every Occultist. It is impossible to see, indeed, how the phenomena of magnetism — whether terrestrial or animal — can be explained otherwise than by admitting a material, or substantial magnetic fluid. This, even some of the Scientists do not deny — Helmholtz believing that electricity must be *as atomic as matter* — which *it is*.<sup>1</sup> And, unless Science is prepared to divorce force from matter, we do not see how it can support its position much longer.

But we are not at all so sure about certain other Forces — so far as their *effects* are concerned — and Esoteric philosophy would find an easy objection to every assumption of the Substantialists — *e.g.*, with regard to sound. As the day is dawning when the new theory is sure to array itself against Occultism, it is as well, perhaps, to anticipate the objections and dispose of them at once.

The expression “immaterial Substance” used above in connection with *magnetism* is a very strange one, and moreover, it is self-contradictory. If, instead of saying that “*magnetism . . . is not only a real, substantial entity but an absolutely immaterial substance,*” the writer should have applied this definition to light, sound or any other force in its effects, we would have nothing to say, except to remark that the adjective “supersensuous” would have been more applicable to any force than the word “immaterial.”<sup>2</sup> But to say this of the magnetic fluid is wrong, as it is an essence which is quite perceptible to any clairvoyant, whether in darkness — as in the case of *odic emanations* — or in light — when animal magnetism is practised. Being then a *fluid* in a supersensuous state, still *matter*, it cannot be “immaterial,” and the expression becomes at once as illogical as it is sophistical. With regard to the other *forces* — if by “immaterial” is meant only that which is objective, but beyond the range of our present *normal* perceptions or senses, well and good; but then whatever Substantialists may mean by it, we Occultists and Theosophists demur to the form in which they put it. Substance, we are told in philosophical dictionaries and encyclopaedias,

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<sup>1</sup> Helmholtz, “Faraday Lecture”

[This statement may be found in an address delivered by Hermann von Helmholtz at a memorial gathering before the Chemical Society in London, in 1881. In the course of this address entitled “Die Neuere Entwicklung von Faraday’s Ideen über Elektrizität,” the lecturer said:

“ . . . Wenn wir Atome der chemischen Elemente annehmen, so können wir nicht umhin, weiter zu schliessen, das auch die Elektrizität, positive sowohl wie negative, in bestimmten elementare Quanta getheilt ist, die sich wie Atome der Elektrizität verhalten. . . . ”

This address is to be found in von Helmholtz’ *Vorträge und Reden*, Vol. II, pp. 252-91 (5<sup>th</sup> ed., Braunschweig: Fr. Vieweg und Sohn, 1903), the actual words being on page 272. It is one of the earliest pronouncements by Western scientists concerning the then probable, or at least suspected, discontinuous structure or nature of electricity, some sixteen years prior to the discovery of the electron in 1897. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

<sup>2</sup> The use of the terms “matter, or substance existing in *supersensuous* conditions” or, “supersensuous states of matter” would avoid an outburst of fierce but just criticism not only from men of Science, but from any ordinary well-educated man who knows the value of terms.



is that which *underlies* outward phenomena; substratum; the permanent subject or cause of phenomena, whether material or spiritual; that in which properties inhere; that which is real in distinction from that which is only *apparent* — especially in this world of *māyā*. It is in short — *real*, and the one real Essence. But the Occult sciences, while calling Substance the *noumenon* of every material form, explain that *noumenon* as being *still matter* — only on another plane. That which is *noumenon* to our human perceptions is matter to those of a Dhyāni-Chohan. As explained by our learned Vedāntin Brother — T. Subba Row — *Mūlaprakriti*, the first universal aspect of Parabrahman, its Kosmic Veil, and whose essence, to us, is unthinkable, is to the LOGOS “as material as any object is material to us.”<sup>1</sup> Hence — no Occultist would describe Substance as “immaterial” *in esse*.

Substance is a confusing term, in any case. We may call our body, or an ape, or a stone, as well as any kind of fabric — “substantial.” Therefore, we call “Essence” rather, the material of the bodies of those Entities — the supersensuous Beings, in whom we believe, and who do exist, but whom Science and its admirers regard as superstitious nonsense, calling *fictions* alike a “personal” god and the angels of the Christians, as they would our Dhyāni-Chohans, or the Devas, “Planetary Men,” Genii, *etc., etc.*, of the Kabbalists and Occultists. But the latter would never dream of calling the phenomena of Light Sound, Heat, Cohesion, *etc.* — “Entities,” as the Substantialists do. They would define those Forces as purely *immaterial* perceptive effects — *without*, of substantial and *essential* CAUSES — within: at the ultimate end of which, or at the origin, stands an ENTITY, the essence of the latter changing with that of the Element<sup>2</sup> it belongs to.<sup>3</sup> Nor can the Soul be confused with FORCES, which are on quite another plane of perception. It shocks, therefore, a Theosophist to find the Substantialists so *unphilosophically* including Soul among the Forces.

Having — as he tells his readers — “laid the foundation of our argument in the clearly defined analogies of nature,” the editor of the *Scientific Arena*, in an article called “Scientific Evidence of a Future Life,” proceeds as follows:

. . . If the principles of Substantialism be true, then, as there shown, every force or form of energy known to science must be a substantial entity. We further endeavoured to show that if one form of force were conclusively demonstrated to be a substantial or objective existence, it would be a clear departure from reason and consistency not to assume all the forces or phenomena-producing causes in nature also to be substantial entities. But if one form of physical force, or one single phenomenon-producing cause, such as heat, light, or sound, could be clearly shown to be the mere *motion* of material particles, and not a substantial entity or thing, then by rational analogy and the harmonious uniformity of nature’s laws, all the other forces or phenomena-producing caus-

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<sup>1</sup> *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*

<sup>2</sup> Useless to remind again the reader, that by Elements it is not the *compound* air, water and earth, that exist, present to our terrestrial and sensuous perceptions, that are meant — but the *noumenal* Elements of the ancients.

<sup>3</sup> See “Monads, Gods, and Atoms” of Volume I, *The Secret Doctrine*, Book II.

[Gods, Monads, and Atoms,” Vol. I, Book I, Part III, pp. 610-32, in the final draft of *The Secret Doctrine*, as published in 1888. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

es, whether physical, vital, mental, or spiritual, must come within the same category as non-entitative *modes of motion* of material particles. Hence it would follow in such case, that the soul, life, mind, or spirit, so far from being a substantial entity which can form the basis of a hope for an immortal existence beyond the present life, must, according to materialism, and as the mere *motion* of brain and nerve particles, cease to exist whenever such physical particles shall cease to move at death.

SPIRIT — a “substantial Entity”!! Surely Substantialism cannot pretend very seriously to the title of *philosophy* — in such case. But let us read the arguments to the end. Here we find a just and righteous attack on Materialism wound up with the same unphilosophical assertion! . . .

From the foregoing statement of the salient positions of materialistic science, as they bear against the existence of the soul after death, we drew the logical conclusion that no Christian philosopher who accepts the current doctrines of sound, light, and heat as but *modes of molecular motion*, can ever answer the analogical reasoning of the materialist against the immortality of man. No possible view, as we have so often insisted, can make the least headway against such materialistic reasoning or frame any reply to this great argument of Haeckel and Huxley against the soul as an entity and its possible existence separate from the body, save the teaching of Substantialism which so consistently maintains that the soul, life, mind, and spirit are necessarily substantial forces or entities from the analogies of physical science, namely, *the substantial nature of all the physical forces, including gravity, electricity, magnetism, cohesion, sound, light, heat, etc.*

This impregnable position of the Substantialist from logical analogy, based on the harmonious uniformity of nature’s laws and forces, forms the bulwark of the Substantial Philosophy, and must in the nature of things forever constitute the strong tower of that system of teaching. If the edifice of Substantialism, thus founded and fortified, can be taken and sacked by the forces of materialism, then our labours for so many years have manifestly come to naught. Say, if you please, that the armies of Substantialism are thus burning the bridges behind them. So be it. We prefer death to either surrender or retreat; for if this fundamental position cannot be maintained against the combined forces of the enemy, then all is lost, materialism has gained the day, and death is an eternal annihilation to the human race. Within this central citadel of principles, therefore, we have intrenched ourselves to survive or perish, and here, encircled by this wall of adamant, we have stored all our treasures and munitions of war, and if the agnostic hordes of materialistic science wish to possess them, let them train upon it their heaviest artillery . . .

How strange, then, when materialists themselves recognize the desperateness of their situation, and so readily grasp the true bearing of this analogical argument based on the substantial nature of the physical forces, that we should be obliged to reason with professed substantialists, giving them argument upon argument in order to prove to them that they are no substantialists at all, in the true sense of that term, so long as they leave one single force of nature, or

one single phenomenon-producing cause in nature, out of the category of substantial entities!

One minister of our acquaintance speaks glowingly of the ultimate success of the Substantial Philosophy, and proudly calls himself a substantialist, but refuses to include sound among the substantial forces and entities, thus virtually accepting the wave-theory! In the name of all logical consistency, what could that minister say in reply to another “substantialist” who would insist upon the beauty and truth of Substantialism, but who could not include *light*? And then another who could not include *heat*, or *electricity*, or *magnetism*, or *gravity*? Yet all of them good “substantialists” on the very same principle as is the one who leaves *sound* out of the substantial category, while still claiming to be an orthodox substantialist! Why should they not leave *life-force* and *mind-force* and *spirit-force* out of the list of entities, thus making them, like sound-force (as materialists insist), but the vibration of material particles, and still claim the right to call themselves good substantialists? Haeckel and Huxley would then be duly qualified candidates for baptism into the church of Substantialism.

The truth is, the minister who can admit for one moment that *sound* consists of but the motion of air-particles, and thus, that it is not a substantial entity, is a materialist at bottom, though he may not be conscious of the logical maelstrom that is whirling him to scientific destruction. We have all heard of the play of “Hamlet,” with the Prince of Denmark left out. Such would be the scientific play of Substantialism with the sound question ignored, and the theory of acoustics handed over to materialism.

We sympathize with the “Minister” who refuses to include *Sound* among “Substantial Entities.” We believe in FOHAT, but would hardly refer to his *Voice* and Emanations as “Entities,” though they are produced by an electric shock of atoms and repercussions producing *both Sound and Light*. Science would accept no more our Fohat than the Sound or Light-Entities of the “Substantial Philosophy” (?). But we have this satisfaction, at any rate, that, once thoroughly explained, Fohat will prove more philosophical than either the materialistic or substantial theories of the forces of nature.

How can anyone with pretensions to both a *scientific* and *psychological* mind, speaking of *Soul* and especially of Spirit, place them on the same level as the physical phenomena of nature, and this, in a language one can apply *only* to physical facts! Even Professor Bain, “a monistic ANNIHILATIONIST,” as he is called, confesses that “mental and bodily states are utterly contrasted.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the direct conclusion the Occultists and the Theosophists can come to at any rate on the *prima facie* evidence furnished them by writings which no philosophy can now rebut, is — that Substantial Philosophy, which was brought forth into this world to fight materialistic science and to slay it, surpasses it immeasurably in Materialism. No Bain, no Huxley, nor even Haeckel, has ever confused to this degree mental and physical phenomena. At the same time the “apostles of Materialism” are on a higher plane of philosophy than their opponents. For, the charge preferred against

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<sup>1</sup> The Substantialists call, moreover, *Spirit* that which we call mind — (*Manas*), and thus it is Soul which takes with them the place of ATMA; in short they confuse the vehicle with the Driver inside.

them of teaching that Soul is “the mere motion of brain and nerve particles” is untrue, for they never did so teach. But, even supposing such would be their theory, it would only be in accordance with Substantialism, since the latter assures us that Soul and *Spirit*, as much as all “the *phenomena-producing causes*” (?) whether physical, mental, or spiritual — if not regarded as SUBSTANTIAL ENTITIES — “must come within the same category as *non-entitative* (?) *modes of motion* of material particles.”

All this is not only painfully vague, but is almost meaningless. The inference that the acceptance of the received scientific theories on light, sound and heat, *etc.*, would be equivalent to accepting *the soul motion of molecules* — is certainly hardly worth discussion. It is quite true that some thirty or forty years ago Büchner and Moleschott attempted to prove that sensation and thought are a movement of matter. But this has been pronounced by a well-known English *Annihilationist* “unworthy of the name of ‘philosophy.’” Not one man of real scientific reputation or of any eminence, not Tyndall, Huxley, Maudsley, Clifford, Bain, Spencer nor Lewes, in England, nor Virchow, nor Haeckel in Germany, has ever gone so far as to say: — “Thought IS a motion of molecules.” Their only quarrel with the believers in a soul was and is, that while the latter maintain that soul is the *cause* of thought, they (the Scientists) assert that thought is the *concomitant* of certain physical processes in the brain. Nor have they ever said (the *real* scientists and philosophers, however materialistic) that thought and nervous motion *are the same*, but that they are “the subjective and objective sides of the same thing.”

John Stuart Mill is a good authority and an example to quote, and thus deny the charge. For, speaking of the rough and rude method of attempting to resolve sensation into nervous motion (taking as his example the case of *the nerve-vibrations* to the brain which are the physical side of the *light* perception), “at the end of all these motions, there is something which is *not motion* — there is *a feeling or sensation of colour, . . .*” he says. Hence, it is quite true to say, that “the *subjective feeling* here spoken of by Mill will outlive even the acceptance of the undulatory theory of light, or heat, as a mode of motion.” For the latter is based on a *physical speculation* and the former is built on everlasting *philosophy* — however imperfect, because so tainted with Materialism.

Our quarrel with the Materialists is not so much for their *soulless Forces*, as for their denying the existence of any “Force-bearer,” the Noumenon of Light, Electricity, *etc.* To accuse them of not making a difference between mental and physical phenomena is equal to proclaiming oneself ignorant of their theories. The most famous *Negationists* are to-day the first to admit that SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS and MOTION “are at the opposite poles of existence.” That which remains to be settled between us and the *materialistic IDEALISTS* — a living paradox by the way, now personified by the most eminent writers on *Idealistic* philosophy in England — is the question whether that consciousness is only experienced in connection with organic molecules of the brain or not. We say it is the thought or mind which sets the molecules of the physical brain in motion; they deny any existence to mind, independent of the brain. But even *they* do not call the seat of the mind “a molecular fabric,” but only that it is “the *mind-principle*” — the seat or the organic basis of the manifesting mind. That such is the real attitude of materialistic science may be demonstrated by reminding the

reader of Mr. Tyndall's confessions in his *Fragments of Science*,<sup>1</sup> for since the days of his discussions with Dr. Martineau, the attitude of the Materialists has not changed. This attitude remains unaltered, unless, indeed, we place the *Hylo-Idealists* on the same level as Mr. Tyndall — which would be absurd. Treating of the phenomenon of Consciousness, the great physicist quotes this question from Dr. Martineau: "A man can say 'I feel, I think, I love,' but how does consciousness infuse itself into the problem?" And he thus answers:

The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously; we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other. They appear together, but *we do not know why*. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated, as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; *were we capable* of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, 'How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?' The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable.

Thus, there appears to be far less disagreement between the Occultists and modern Science than between the former and the Substantialists. The latter confuse most hopelessly the subjective with the objective phases of all phenomena, and the Scientists do not, notwithstanding that they limit the *subjective* to the earthly or terrestrial phenomena only. In this they have chosen the Cartesian method with regard to atoms and molecules; we hold to the ancient and primitive philosophical beliefs, so intuitively perceived by Leibnitz. Our system can thus be called, as his was — "Spiritualistic and Atomistic."

Substantialists speak with great scorn of the vibratory theory of science. But, until able to *prove* that their views would explain the phenomena as well, filling, moreover, the actual gaps and flaws in the modern hypotheses, they have hardly the right to use such a tone. As all such theories and speculations are only provisional, we may well leave them alone. Science has made wonderful discoveries on the objective side of all the physical phenomena. Where it is really wrong is, when it perceives in matter *alone* — *i.e.*, in that matter which is known to it — the *alpha* and the *omega* of all phenomena. To reject the scientific theory, however, of vibrations in light and sound, is to court as much ridicule as the scientists do in rejecting *physical* and *objective* spiritualistic phenomena by attributing them all to fraud. Science has ascertained and *proved* the exact rapidity with which the sound-waves travel, and it has artificially imitated — on the data of transmission of sound by those waves — the human voice and other acoustic phenomena. The *sensation* of sound — the response of the sensory tract to an *objective* stimulus (atmospheric vibrations) is an affair of consciousness: and to call sound an "Entity" on *this* plane, is to *objectivate* most ridicu-

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<sup>1</sup> [Part II, Introduction, pp. 340-41, in 6<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1891. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]



lously a *subjective* phenomenon which is but an effect after all — the lower end of a concatenation of causes. If Materialism locates all in objective matter and fails to see the origin and primary causes of the Forces — so much the worse for the materialists; for it only shows the limitations of their own capacities of hearing and seeing — limitations which Huxley, for one, recognizes, for he is unable on his own confession to define the boundaries of our senses, and still asserts his materialistic tendency by locating sounds only in cells of matter, and on our sensuous plane. Behold, the great Biologist dwarfing our senses and curtailing the powers of man and nature in his usual ultrapoetical language. Hear him<sup>1</sup> speak of “the wonderful noonday silence of a tropical forest,” which “*is, after all, due only to the dullness of our hearing; and could our ears catch the murmurs of these tiny maelstroms, as they whirl in the innumerable myriads of living cells which constitute each tree, we should be stunned as with the roar of a great city.*”

The telephone and the phonograph, moreover, are there to upset any theory except the vibratory one — however *materialistically* expressed. Hence, the attempt of the Substantialists “to show the fallacy of the wave-theory of sound as universally taught, and to outline the substantial theory of acoustics,” cannot be successful. If they show that sound is not *a mode of motion in its origin* and that the forces are not merely the qualities and property of matter induced or generated *in, by and through* matter, under certain conditions — they will have achieved a great triumph. But, whether as substance, matter or effect, sound and light can never be divorced from their modes of manifesting through *vibrations* — as the whole subjective or occult nature is one everlasting perpetual motion of VORTICAL vibrations.



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<sup>1</sup> As quoted by Stirling, *Concerning Protoplasm*. [Reference is here to James Hutchison Stirling’s *As Regards Protoplasm*, London, 1872; Preface, p. 12. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

# Alexander Nikolayevich Aksakov

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (BIBLIOGRAPHY) I pp. 444-46.

## Biographical and bibliographical notes by Boris de Zirkoff

Russian author, philosopher and prominent figure among writers on Spiritualism. He was born May 27<sup>th</sup> or June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1832, in the village of Repyevka, Gorodishchensky uyezd, Province of Penza, on the estate of his father, Nikolay Timofeyevich, brother of Serguey Timofeyevich, the author of the renowned *Family Chronicle*. His mother was Catherine Alexeyevna Panov, of an old aristocratic family of the Province of Simbirsk. He was educated in the Alexander Lyceum of St. Petersburg, and on graduation in 1851, entered service in the Ministry of the Interior. Appointed on a Statistical Expedition, he spent some time in the Provinces studying religious dissidents. In 1855–56 he attended courses at the Faculty of Medicine at Moscow University, but soon after resumed his service to the State in the Department of Governmental Properties. He retired from Government service in 1878 with the rank of Actual Civil Councillor.

From his early years, Aksakov was interested in problems of theology and philosophy, and, while still in the Lyceum, came in contact with the teachings of Swedenborg; this was his introduction to a philosophical outlook whereby he endeavoured to establish an empirical basis for his belief in the spiritual destiny of mankind. As a result of his studies, he published the following works:

- 1 On Heaven, the World of Spirits, and Hell, as Seen and Heard by E. Swedenborg, Leipzig, 1863.
- 2 The Gospel according to Swedenborg, Leipzig, 1864.
- 3 The Rationalism of Swedenborg, etc., Leipzig, 1870.

This latter work led him to the sphere of Spiritualism which absorbed his interest in the second half of the sixties. It is in writings of Andrew Jackson Davis<sup>1</sup> that he found the clearest exposition of his own attitude, and so he proceeded to publish in Germany a series of German translations from Davis' works:

- 4 *Der Reformator*, Leipzig, 1867.
- 5 *Der Zauberstab*, Leipzig, 1868.
- 6 *Die Principien der Natur*, Leipzig, 1869.
- 7 *Der Arzt*, Leipzig, 1873.

His special interest lay in the study of such psychic phenomena as would provide evidence for the existence of a spiritual Principle in man. In so doing, Aksakov found

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<sup>1</sup> [Andrew Jackson Davis, 1826–1910, American Spiritualist]

a most sympathetic interest in Professor Butlerov, the renowned Russian chemist, who openly declared his belief in the reality of mediumistic phenomena.

During this period of his life, Aksakov translated into Russian a large number of works, among which should be mentioned:

**8** *Manual of Magnetotherapy*, of Count F. von Szapary. *tr.* from the French, St. Petersburg, 1860.

**9** *Experimental investigation of Spiritualism*, of R. Hare. *tr.* from the English, Leipzig, 1866.

**10** *Spiritualism and Science*. Investigations of Crookes' Psychic Force. St. Petersburg, 1872.

**11** *Outline of the History of the Committee on Mediumism of the Physical Society at the St. Petersburg University*, St. Petersburg, 1883.

**12** *Monument to Scientific Prejudice*. The conclusions of the committee on Mediumism, St. Petersburg, 1883.

He also wrote several monographs on Hellenbach and d'Assier and their works. He published in German several of the works mentioned above, adding to the list two works by A.R. Wallace. As far as is known, Aksakov himself paid all the expenses connected with this vast literary output.

In 1874, Aksakov founded at Leipzig a monthly called *Psychische Studien* dedicated to the investigation of little known psychic phenomena. This periodical continued to be published until 1934, having changed its name to *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie* in 1925. A perusal of the contents of the early volumes of this publication shows it to have been by far one of the most outstanding periodicals on the subject published at the time.

Aksakov's personal views concerning Spiritualism are clearly outlined in his Preface to his first edition of *Spiritualism and Science*,<sup>1</sup> from which it appears that he made a clear distinction between observed facts and the theories current at the time to account for them. The basis and chief purpose of his literary activity was to observe and to record *facts* of genuine mediumism, entirely devoid of any theory or hypothesis, or religious and sectarian bias. He contended that a scientific approach to this subject would require an array of scientifically established *facts*, and that in due course of time some plausible theory, or a series of them, would emerge to justify facts on some reasonable basis. These views are further outlined in the January 1878 issue of his periodical. It is evident, therefore, that the views of Aksakov on this whole subject were very closely allied to H.P. Blavatsky's attitude towards the known facts and genuine manifestations of the mediums of her time. She found in Aksakov a splendid ally, and they both aroused rabid enmity on the part of those whose minds had crystallized on mere theories, in the various functions of the Spiritualistic and Spiritistic movement.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Petersburg, 1872

At a later time, Aksakov published the following works:

- 13** *Spiritism*, by K.R.E. von Hartmann. *tr.* by A.M. Butlerov, 1887.
- 14** *A.M. Butlerov on Mediumism*. With a portrait of the author and reminiscences of N.P. Wagner, 1889.
- 15** *Forerunners of Spiritism for the last 250 Years* [Russian text]. St. Petersburg: V. Demakov, 1895; 513 *pp.*
- 16** *A Case of partial dematerialization of the body of a medium*. *tr.* from the French. Boston, 1898.
- 17** *Animism and Spiritism* [Russian text], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., St. Petersburg: V. Demakov, 1901. 679 *pp.*; German *tr.* Leipzig, 1894; French *tr.* Paris, 1906.

Aksakov died in 1903, after a long and extremely useful life in the cause of scientific research on little known lines, and a field suspect by official science. Most of his work along these lines had to be located in Germany, on account of the enmity existing then in Russia against anything pertaining to this field of research.

