

anatomical probability, we may venture to observe, that these hypotheses do not tend at all to elucidate the physiological principle which is here involved; for this principle cannot be mechanical, chemical, or physical, and therefore cannot be better understood by embodying it in a fluid; the difficulty we have in conceiving what the moving force *is*, is not got rid of by explaining the machinery by which it is merely *transferred*. In tracing the phenomena of sensation and volition to their cause, it is clear that we must call in some peculiar and hyper-physical principle. The hypothesis of a fluid is not made more satisfactory by attenuating the fluid; it becomes subtle, spirituous, ethereal, imponderable, to no purpose; it must cease to be a fluid, before its motions can become sensation and volition. This, indeed, is acknowledged by most physiologists; and strongly stated by Cuvier.<sup>19</sup> "The impression of external objects upon the *MÉ*, the production of a sensation, of an image, is a mystery impenetrable for our thoughts." And in several places, by the use of this peculiar phrase, "*the me*," (*le moi*,) for the sentient and volent faculty, he marks, with peculiar appropriateness and force, that phraseology borrowed from the world of matter will, in this subject, no longer answer our purpose. We have here to go from Nouns to Pronouns, from Things to Persons. We pass from the Body to the Soul, from Physics to Metaphysics. We are come to the borders of material philosophy; the next step is into the domain of Thought and Mind. Here, therefore, we begin to feel that we have reached the boundaries of our present subject. The examination of that which lies beyond them must be reserved for a philosophy of another kind, and for the labors of the future; if we are ever enabled to make the attempt to extend into that loftier and wider scene, the principles which we gather on the ground we are now laboriously treading.

Such speculations as I have quoted respecting the nervous fluid, proceeding from some of the greatest philosophers who ever lived, prove only that hitherto the endeavor to comprehend the mystery of perception and will, of life and thought, have been fruitless and vain. Many anatomical truths have been discovered, but, so far as our survey has yet gone, no genuine physiological principle. All the trains of physiological research which we have followed have begun in exact examination of organization and function, and have ended in wide conjectures and arbitrary hypotheses. The stream of knowledge in all such cases is

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<sup>19</sup> *Règne Animal*, Introd. p. 47.