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Physiology and Genius.

Inasmuch as the mind is in some manner undoubtedly dependent upon the brain for its manifestations in this life, various daring and ingenious theories have been advanced, from time to time in the past, to explain genius from a semi-physiological standpoint. One of these is that advanced by Mr. Aleister Crowley, in an article entitled "Energised Enthusiasm" in Volume IX of *The Equinox*. The theory is there advanced that, in addition to the gross secretion of the sex glands, there may also be formed (provided the suitable "magnetic reactions" be established) a more subtle, secondary secretion, which is poured into the blood stream, stimulating the nerve cells, and particularly the brain cells, thus constituting, as it were, *the physical basis of genius*. It is observed that, at the time when this article was written, next to nothing was known of the endocrine glands. Today, this secondary secretion is known to exist—though its functions have not been finally determined. There is doubtless much material of interest in this connection, which might be obtained by making a careful, systematic and comparative study of the whole subject. Inasmuch as so little is known of this aspect of the question, however, it would be useless to discuss it further. I mention it here mainly for the sake of historical completeness, and because of the ingenuity of the idea.*

* In his *Goetia of Solomon the King*, Crowley has pursued this line of suggestive inquiry, particularly with regard to magical ceremonies and invocations, and he there says:—

"What is the cause of my illusion of seeing a spirit in the triangle of Art? Every smatterer, every expert in psychology, will answer: 'That cause lies in your brain. . . .' These unusual impressions, then, produce unusual brain changes; hence their summary is of unusual kind. Its projection back into the apparently phenomenal world is therefore unusual. The spirits of the *Goetia* are portions of the human brain. . . . Our Ceremonial

Magic fines down, then, to a series of minute, though of course empirical, physiological experiments. . . ." He elsewhere speaks of "inflaming the brain" by means of magical ceremonies, etc.