

ALBERT DE ROCHAS

The Astral Body and Premonitions

SUCCESSIVE LIVES • NOTEBOOK 4

Memory at death, prophecy and fate

PART III

BLUSABOOKS



The Astral Body and Premonitions

ALBERT DE ROCHAS · SUCCESSIVE LIVES (PARIS, 1911) · PART
III

Every chapter — four parts

IN DE ROCHAS'S WORDS

*the complete text, checked against the
French edition of 1911*

IN PLAIN WORDS

what happens in this chapter

TERMS

the chapter concepts explained

WHAT MODERN SCIENCE SAYS

*hypnosis, memory and what is still
unexplained*

A historical text, not a manual.

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FOREWORD

Does a human being have a second, subtler body that can leave the flesh in sleep, under anaesthesia or at the moment of death? And if one can sometimes look into the past, can one just as well glimpse the future?

The author of this notebook is **Albert de Rochas** (Albert de Rochas d'Aiglun, 1837–1914) — a French officer of engineers who served in the army until he reached the rank of lieutenant colonel, later became administrator of the École Polytechnique in Paris, and devoted his life to what his era called magnetism and hypnosis. In 1911 his book *Les vies successives* ("Successive Lives") was published.

This is the **fourth notebook**. It contains **Part III of the book** — "**Analogous Phenomena**". After his own sessions, in which subjects "remembered" previous lives, de Rochas looks for similar phenomena outside hypnosis: traditions about the astral body and accounts of leaving the body; the "panorama" of one's whole life that drowning and falling people see in a few seconds; children and adults who seem to remember earlier lives; foretold reincarnations; prophecies and dreams that came true; and finally the question of whether a foreseeable future leaves any room for free will.

How to read. Each chapter has four parts. *In de Rochas's words* — the author's complete text, translated from the 1911 French edition and checked against the original. It is followed by three parts of our own: *In plain words* — what happens in the chapter; *Terms* — the chapter's key concepts; *What modern science says* — what is known about these phenomena today and what still remains unexplained.

In the series "Successive Lives":

1 · Ancient Beliefs and Magnetic Sleep 2 · Back Through the Lives 3 · Eleven Lives 4 · The Astral Body and Premonitions 5 · The Evolution of the Soul

CHAPTER I

THE ASTRAL BODY

IN DE ROCHAS'S WORDS

PART THREE — ANALOGOUS PHENOMENA

CHAPTER I — THE ASTRAL BODY

§ I. TRADITIONS CONCERNING THE ASTRAL BODY

Homer calls Eidolon the ethereal body or sensible form which the soul puts on after death — this body is incorruptible¹¹¹; its substance is superior to the flesh and bones that make up our material body¹¹².

111 *Iliade* (Iliad) V, 857.

112 *Iliade* (Iliad) XIV, 353.

"Pythagoras taught that the soul has a body, which is given to it according to its good or evil nature by the previous labour of its faculties. He called this body the subtle chariot of the soul, and said that the mortal body is but its coarse envelope. It is, he added, by practising virtue, by embracing truth and by abstaining from every impure thing that one must take care of the soul and of its body of light." Hiérocles¹¹³

113 *Commentaires sur les vers dorés de Pythagore* (Commentary on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras) (5th century).

Aristotle¹¹⁴ says that invisible beings are as substantial as visible ones. Invisible beings even have bodies, but very subtle and ethereal ones. Aristotle distinguished, apart from the body, the Spirit (Nous), the principle of thought, and the soul (Psyché), the principle of life.

114 *Physique* (Physics) IV, 2 and 3.

"The soul is the breath of life; it is incorporeal only by comparison with the mortal body; it keeps the shape of the man so that it may be recognised." Saint Irenaeus

"Nothing is created that is not corporeal, that is to say without substantial form, neither in heaven nor on earth, neither among things visible nor among things invisible. All is formed of elements, and souls, whether they dwell in a body or go out of it, always have a corporeal substance." Saint Hilary

"The soul will be clothed, after death, in an ethereal body resembling its earthly body." Origen¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁵ *Fragment de résurrection* (Fragment on the Resurrection), op. 1, p. 35.

Saint Augustine, in his treatise on the Divination of Demons, gives these demons, that is to say the visible beings that surround us, an aerial body which closely resembles the astral body¹¹⁶: "The soul is not directly enclosed in the material and earthly body. In order to enter it, it puts on a subtle and as it were aerial body, which one pictures as a kind of reproduction of the material body, growing and developing along with it: a child if it be a child, a woman if it be a woman, a man if it be a man. This is what was called the Ka, the conception of which MM. Lepagne-Renour and Maspéro have perfectly determined. M. Maspéro renders it as the Double; one might just as well call it the Shadow or the subtle body. It is the Eidolon of the Greeks." Lenormand¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Daemonum ea natura est, ut aerii corporis sensu terrenorum corporum sensum facile praecedant : celeritate etiam propter ejusdem aerii corporis superiorum mobilitatem... volatus avium incomparabiliter vincunt.*

¹¹⁷ *La Magie chez les Chaldéens* (Magic among the Chaldeans).

Colebrouke says that according to Kapyla there exists, between the subtle form — emanating from the original nature and resulting from the primitive or initial development of the rudiments of the primordial creation — and the coarse, material form, yet another form, intermediate, refined and tenuous. It is, he says elsewhere, by means of the ethereal body that spirits manifest themselves¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁸ Pauthier, in his *Essais sur la philosophie des Hindous* (Essays on the Philosophy of the Hindus), p. 131.

In his *Mémoires sur la Chine* (Memoirs on China), Count d'Escayrac de Lautrec reproduces a Buddhist painting representing Ma-Ming-Tsim, a celebrated hermit who escapes temptations and terrors by releasing himself from his fluidic body. One sees the fluidic cord which, leaving the crown of the head, links the physical body to the astral body.



Figure XXV. *Ma-ming-Tshin freeing himself from his fluidic body.*

"The souls of men, after their separation from the coarse body, are clothed in an ethereal body¹¹⁹." *Lois de Manou* (The Laws of Manu)

119 *Lois de Manou* (The Laws of Manu), XII, § 16 and 21.

"Jehovah made for man a coarse body drawn from the elements of the earth. And he united to these material organs the intelligent and free soul, already bearing with it the divine breath, the spirit that follows it through all its lives; and the means of this union of the soul with the coarse body was a vital breath (Nephesch)." *Genèse* (Genesis)¹²⁰

120 Chapter II, verse 7. Translation by Henri Pezzani.

The Greenlanders believe that there are two souls in man: 1° the breath, which animates the body and sustains life; 2° the shadow, which already frees itself in dreams and which separates from the body entirely at death. Krantz¹²¹

121 Krantz. *Histoire du Groenland* (History of Greenland).

The Canadians believe that there are two souls in the body: one of these souls remains after death beside the corpse; the other departs for the spiritual sphere. Delaborde

"The soul of man, coming immediately from God, joins itself by fitting means to the material body; and to this end, first of all at its very descent and at its first approaches, it finds itself clothed in a little body of air, which is called the ethereal vehicle of the soul; others name it the chariot of the soul... And hence this image of the soul, sometimes taking on a body of air, covers itself with a shadow and wraps itself in it; now it gives counsel to its friends, now it torments its enemies. For the passions, remembrance and the sensations remain with the soul after it is separated from the body." H. Corneille Agrippa¹²²

122 Henri Corneille Agrippa. *La Philosophie Occulte ou la Magie* (Occult Philosophy, or Magic). First French translation, by E. Gaboriau. Paris, 1910–1911. 2 vols. in-8. Price: 15 fr. Publisher's note.

"There is trinity and unity in man, as in God. Man is one in person; he is threefold in essence. He has the breath of God, or the soul, the sidereal spirit, and the body." Paracelsus

"The created world must endure soul and body. I think that angels have bodies. I am also of the opinion that the rational soul has never been entirely stripped of every body." Leibnitz¹²³.

123 Book III, chap. II. *La loi de Continuité* (The Law of Continuity).

"As soon as a place has been assigned to the soul (after death), its formative faculty radiates all around, in the same way and to the same degree as it did in its living limbs. And as the atmosphere, when it is well charged with rain and rays come to be reflected in it, shows itself adorned with divers colours, so the air around it takes on the form that the soul, stopping there, virtually impresses upon it; and, like the flame that follows the fire wherever it goes, this new form follows the soul everywhere. As it draws its appearance from this, it is called a Shade, and afterwards it organises all the senses, even to that of sight¹²⁴." Dante

124 Dante. *Purgatoire* (Purgatory), XXV.

§ 2. — THE EXTERIORISATION OF THE ASTRAL BODY DURING LIFE

"While the natural body remains stricken with paralysis, the soul sees itself clothed in a body in every respect like its own, without knowing how; it sees this body usually dressed in the same manner, covered with the same garments and