

# Spiritu Electrica



*NEWTON concluded the General Scholium which he added to the revised second edition of the Principia with the following famous paragraph:*

Something might now be added about a certain very subtle spirit that pervades all dense bodies and is concealed in them, by whose force and actions the particles of bodies attract each other when separated by very small intervals, or cohere when contiguous; and by which electric bodies act at greater distances, both repelling and attracting neighboring corpuscles; and by which light is emitted, reflected, refracted and inflected, and heats bodies; and by which all sensation is stimulated, and the limbs of animals are moved at will- for this is done by the vibrations of this spirit transmitted through the solid capillaments of the nerves from the external organs of sensation to the brain, and from the brain to the muscles. But these things cannot be explained in a few words, nor have we at hand a sufficient number of experiments by which to determine and demonstrate the laws of action of this spirit accurately, as ought to be done.

*Newton's Electric Spirit. Four Oddities  
Marie Bos Hall and A. Rupert Hall  
Isis 50(4):473-479 (1959)*

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