

Lensfield Cottage, Cambridge, 3 Jan. 1896.

Dear Sir,

I write to thank you most sincerely for your paper on a new kind of rays, a copy of which I received by this morning's post.

I found it intensely interesting, and I do not know what to think of the nature of these rays, as you name them, though you guard yourself from implying thereby that they are necessarily of the nature of rays properly so called.

I had often seen the expression "Kathodenstrahlen", but till lately took for granted that the expression was intended to be understood in a metaphorical sense. It never entered into my head to suppose that anyone imagined them to be rays in the sense in which we speak of rays of light or of heat; that is, an isolated small portion of undulations propagated in the ether. I thought that they were called rays merely as a convenient term, recalling some of the aspects in which they have a superficial appearance resembling rays. But it seemed to me that an actual transfer of ponderable molecules was an essential part of them. But not long ago Professor J. J. Thomson told me that he thought that some physicists believed them to be actual rays. I do not know what your opinion on this subject is ^o whichever view of the nature of the so-called Kathodenstrahlen be taken, your remarkable experiments show that the influence which you are studying is altogether different in its nature from the Kathodenstrahlen.

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Herrn Professor W. C. Röntgen

Physikalisches Institut der Universität

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Germany