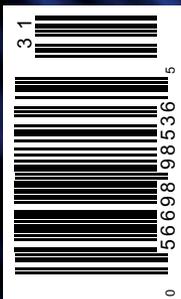


# Cabinet

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## DISSERTATION ON MONADS

LOUIS RIEL

Signed "Louis 'David' Riel," this short text, titled "Mémoire sur les monades," was written when Riel was in prison awaiting execution in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1885.

What is there? There is God. What else is there? There are the things that God created.

The essences of created and possible things have always been.

Essences are composed of "Monads." "Monads" are of such a fineness that they are imperceptible to our senses.

"Monads" are tender, soft, and polished. These three qualities, combined in "Monads," are the principle of *sensibility*.

"Monads" are of two genders; some are male, and others female.

For each male monad, there is a female monad. That is to say that there are in these essences as many males as there are females.

A monad is an electricity. Certain monads are certain electricities. Monads are electricities.

A male monad is a positive electricity.

A female monad is a negative electricity.

Male monads are more firm. When they touch, their firmness even causes them to repel one another. This is what science discovered when it established that electricities of the same name repel one another.

Female monads are softer, more polished, and more tender. When they come into contact with others, their sensibility is affected to such a degree that at first they experience a quiver that soon transforms into a stirring. When it is prolonged, this stirring itself becomes intolerable. In this way repulsion occurs between female monads.

This is what science found when through experimentation it saw that negative electricities repel one another.

Male monads and female monads attract one another.

Because male monads are less soft, less polished, less tender, they do not offend the sensibility of female monads when they encounter them. Female monads are at ease in their presence. It is for this reason that they seek out male monads.

Because female monads are less firm, they do not push the firmness of male monads to the limit when they touch them. Thus male monads conserve a surfeit of energy in their contact with female monads. This surfeit of energy or of firmness is the cause of their well-being. This is what makes male monads seek out female monads.

The male monad experiences an initial affection in touching the female monad, and a second affection in being touched by it. But between these two affections, there is a difference. Sensibility causes it to grasp this difference. Here lies the principle of pleasure between male and female monads.

The male monad experiences an initial affection in touching another male monad; and it experiences a second one in being touched by it. Now between these two affections, there is no difference. Sensibility causes it to grasp this absence of difference. And as in this case the sensation received does not differ from its own perception, the male monad does not find any additional pleasure in its relations with the monad of its gender; it does not seek it out.

Monads are luminous. This is the principle of intelligence.

The fineness of monads is the principle of their extreme mobility. Their mobility is itself the principle of their will.

Monads are of the same size. This is the principle of their liberty.

Monads are tenacious with respect to impressions; this is what constitutes in them the principle of memory.

Monads are of two sorts. Some are active and the others passive.

Passive monads have all the properties of active monads, but at a much lower level.

Every active monad has a passive monad that belongs to it. And with which it does what it pleases.

Active monads constitute active essences. Active essences are of an infinite number. The active monads that compose each essence are themselves infinitely numerous.

Every monad has its splendor as well as the splendor it

receives from another monad. Now between these two brightnesses, there is a difference that sensibility makes them grasp. This is the principle of vision

Every monad vibrates when acting. Now between its own vibration and that which happens to it there is a difference. Sensibility makes it grasp this difference. This is the principle of touch.

Every monad that is in contact with another makes a noise; now between the noise that it makes and the one it receives, there is a difference that sensibility makes it grasp. This is the principle of hearing.

Every monad has a scent. Between its own scent and that which it encounters there is a difference that sensibility makes it grasp. This is the principle of smell.

Every monad has a taste. Now between its own taste and the one it encounters, there is a difference that sensibility makes it grasp. This is the principle of taste.

Monads have an affinity for each other. This is the principle of love.

Essences feel for each other an attraction, whose force is beyond all other forces; this is indivisibility.

Essences are married together in a very intimate way and in perfect proportion. This is what causes them to be one, but their unity is infinite.

I'm only touching here, so to speak, on the subject of primordial essences. I would like to be able to lay out this revelation in all its beauty!! If God, whose power is infinite, deigns to come miraculously to my aid ... as I have the undying confidence he will do; and if our holy Father the Pope, to whom I submit everything I write through the intervention of the Monseigneur, allows me to continue; then I will attempt to realize this with his holy benediction. For my mission is also to explain the existence of God, creation, and the plan of creation itself, but since obedience to the authority of the church has a continual relation to my sanctification, my mission consists above all in obeying.

*Translation: Justin E. H. Smith*