Eternal Wanderings of the Monad

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Abstract

Monad is one of the main topics in philosophy in all centuries of human knowledge. The paper aims to present the views about monad of the Pythagoreans and Plato, Leibniz, Kant, and Elena Blavatsky in her main work The Secret Doctrine. An attempt will be made to expose the community and unity in the understanding of the Monad, as well as Elena Blavatsky’s contribution to the understanding of the Monad as a “bridge” between Eastern and Western knowledge and civilization.

Keywords: monad, Pythagoreans, Plato, Leibniz, Kant, Blavatsky, East-West bridge.

1. Introduction

The title of this article implies mandatory terminological explanations and clarifications. They relate to the meaning and the discursive placement of the three words – “eternity”, “wandering” and “monad”, in the context of their philosophical, historical and social significance with regard to the basic idea of this text. The idea is an attempt to prove that the Monad as a metaphysical essence is an integral part of the philosophy of Ancient China and India, Ancient Greece, the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, and the love of wisdom in the last two centuries. The exhibition follows two main directions – historical and socially influential.

The philosophical definition of “eternity” is ambiguous, with only the Stanford Encyclopedia² there are 184 explanations of the concept. In the general sense, eternity refers to the infinite duration and immutability of time-space on the one hand, and to the moral aspects of the concept as a measure of contribution to humanity, bestowed with glory and immortality, on the other. This statement adheres to the temporal-spatial characteristics of the concept of “eternity”. From the depths of the Dao De Jing and Laozi in China, through the unity of Atman and Brahman in Indian philosophy, the numbers of Pythagoreans, Plato’s ideal state, the endless universe of Jordano Bruno, the Leibniz’s Monadology, Helena Blavatsky’s efforts to the Universal Brotherhood, to Husserl’s Cartesian reflections – the Monad tempts philosophical reflections and is invariably present as a concentration of metaphysics and materialism that are intertwined, seemingly opposed, to demonstrate ultimately their mutual conditioning and unity. Consequently, the Monad can be defined as one of the eternal questions of philosophy, and its presence in the treatises of great thinkers metaphorically acquires the dimensions of a constant, invariable,

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infinite and therefore eternal wandering on the white pages as a result of the eternal directs of awake human minds.

2. The Monad in Ancient Greece

As a philosophical concept, the Monad is a meaningful term in various philosophical systems from antiquity to the present day. From Greek, the meaning of the term is “Unit, single”. In western wisdom, the use of the term originates from Pythagoreans. In *Opinions*, Aetius notes that “Pythagoras initially accepts the Monad (uniqueness) and the indeterminate Dioda (duality). One of the origins in him draws rapidly to the acting pressed reason whatsoever god-minded, the other does refer to a passive and material cause, as is apparent world”⁴. For the Pythagoreans, the unit is Monad. From her and from the couple – Diada, “start the numbers”⁴, and “the relationship between the unit (Monad) and the pair (Dioda) corresponds to the defined and the indeterminate. Moreover, it has a moral-ethical meaning and expresses the opposite between perfect and imperfect, good and evil⁵. Hegel, however, notes in Science Logic that “Pythagoreans make a distinction between Monad and Unit; The Monad accepts as a thought, and a unit is a number; in the same way, the number two for them is just an arithmetic expression, and the Dioda – the thought of the indeterminate”.

The Monad corresponds to the point Pythagoreans place at the beginning of all geometric shapes. The point as the center of the circle is used by Pythagoras and later by the Greeks to present the first metaphysical essence according to Western philosophical thought – the first deity, the Absolute. Diogenes Laertius points out in the “Life of the Philosophers” that the Monad is at the beginning of “the sensible things, four of which are fundamental, namely the fire, the water, the earth and the air”⁶.

In Plato’s dialogues, the human soul is the Monad, part of the soul of God. For Plato everything consists of Monads – the flow of light is a collection of monads, a matter is a combination of different monads, which in turn consist of even smaller monads. The microcosm is similar to the macrocosm, Plato affirms. The Sun, Earth, Moon, and Planets are monads at a certain stage of development that forms larger formations, also monads⁷. The Monad as a term also uses neo-platonic philosophers such as Plotinus and Porphyries, often replacing the Monad with the Unified. The Monad is also present in Gnosticism.

3. The Monad against the Inquisition

More recently, the philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and dramatist Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) burnt by the Inquisition uses the term Monad as a reflection of the infinite universe in accordance with the principle of unity of the microcosm and the macrocosm. As a metaphysical unit, the Monad is, according to Bruno, the smallest substance and the basic unit of being, in its merging body and spirit, object and subject. The Monad is God, and in general, the Monad appears as “everything in everything”. These ideas of Giordano Bruno have a definite influence on the development of Modern Times philosophy: the attitude of the single substance to

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the single objects develops Spinoza; for Leibniz, The Monad is the basis of everything that exists. Even in Schelling and Hegel, the Monad is at the heart of the unity of opposites.

4. Leibniz’s Monadology

Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) explains the Universe through the Monad. His “Monadology” was posthumously published as much of the bulk scientific heritage of the German philosopher, mathematician, lawyer, and diplomat. Leibniz defines the Monads as “simple substances contained in the composite. It just is what no parts”\(^8\). “The Monads can begin their existence only through creation and complete it only by destruction, while the complexity of parts and disappears in parts (...) in a created being - and therefore the created Monad is subject to change and even this modification is made continuously in every Monad. It follows from the above that the natural changes of the Monads derive from an internal principle: since an external cause cannot have an influence on the interior of the Monad”\(^9\), notes Leibniz. In his “Monadology” he discussed with René Descartes and he grounded concepts such as “perception” and “apperception” as “a priori” and “a posteriori” - concepts that later Immanuel Kant builds in his “Critique of Pure Reason”. According to Leibniz, “God alone is a first-born and a first-born. All created or evolved Monads are his creatures and, so to speak, they arise through the continuous, instantaneous emanations of the deity, limited by the receptivity of creation for which it is essential to be limited”\(^10\).

5. The Monad in Edmund Husserl’s Cartesian Reflections

In the fourth part of its Cartesian Reflections in 1931 German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) displays the structure of consciousness transcendental Ego and tries to explore it in more detail. Husserl distinguishes the terms Ego as such an Ego as the Monad. Ego – this is an identical subject who has a conscious consciousness, “my Self who experiences this or other content that, while remaining the same, experiences this or other cogito”. This is the pure self, but “no empty pole of identity” and all actions are reflected in the self, in its constitutive self-sufficiency; I – this is “an identical substrate of unchangeable features of the Ego”. While Ego as Monad is “Well go, seen in its full concreteness”, not as a Pole and a substrate of experiences, and it a whole – this is the “de facto Ego”, which “includes all actual and sweaty in a life of the mind”\(^11\).

6. Monad and Eastern philosophy

A number of researchers point out that Pythagoras’ definition of the Monad as a unit, as an expression of Divine unity in the universe, is identical to leading ideas in Indian and Chinese ancient wisdom. For example, in the Rigved’s cosmogonic hymns the idea is presented, according to which everything existent is a unified whole. The idea has different aspects, all of which are subordinate to the Unity. “In the anthem” Purusha Sutta (Rigveda 10.90) the cosmic primordial Purusha sacrifices itself in a ritual for the creation of the world. Purusha is the first man, the impersonal male principle. Later, the idea of Purusha was developed in detail in the philosophy of Sankhya. Purusha is both the sacrificed sacrifice, from the whose purified body the world is born and the One to whom the sacrifice is offered. This Vedic paradox develops in the idea of the

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\(^8\) Leibniz, G. Monadology: [http://friendsoftherainbow.net/node/1170#_ftnref1](http://friendsoftherainbow.net/node/1170#_ftnref1).


Upanishads about the identity of Brahman and Atman (the Absolute and the Self)\(^2\). In Rigveda 10.129, the impersonal principle identical to the Monad of the Pythagoreans is presented as “Tad Ekam” or “This One”: “There was then neither non-existent nor existing, there was no airspace, no sky above it. What’s going on here? Where? Under what protection? Is this water – an endless abyss? There was neither death nor immortality, there was no notice of day or night. This One (Tad Ekam) breathed, without moving the air, from his own energy. And there was nothing else but him”. The Pythagorean cosmogony is in some sense similar to a brief passage found in the Daoist Laozi: “From the Dao comes one, from one comes two, from two comes three, and from three comes the ten thousand things”, said Dao De Jing, Chapter 42.

7. Social aspects of the eternal wanderings of the Monad in *The secret Doctrine*

Paradoxically, the social aspects of the Monad’s eternal wanderings find their justification in the metaphysics of Helena Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*. The transcendental theosophy of Blavatsky has a social character and is related to the constant change of man and society in the infiniteness of the apparent material existence of life on Earth. This manifested existence is an expression of physical presence and physical body as the densest part of the division of the being human. As in Eastern philosophy, theosophy considers man, Earth, space, and the universe as manifestations whose highest part is connected and inseparable from the abstract, absolute, everlasting impersonal nature – the god of the theosophists or Brahman of the Hindus. The evolution of living beings is a cyclical process, a circle in which development begins from the Monad as part of Brahman, and from a purely spiritual state gradually becomes millions of years thickened as it passes through a mineral, plant and animal kingdom to reach this divine spark man and be his immortal particle or his spirit. With the achievement of the ultimate compaction, as it is today, the body of the man and, accordingly, of him – the society that man created, in which he lives and manages – begins the reverse process. This process is a return to the original condition of the Monad, its merging with the infinite absolute essence, and then the beginning of a new evolutionary cycle of a higher stage of development in the infinite universe. Gradually, the sealing is returning to its less dense states, becoming more ethereal and more spiritual. But it is the Monad that remains unchanging and at the same time enriched as the bearer of all the experience, knowledge and wisdom acquired by man in the process of passing it through the spiral of evolution from spiritual to material, and then again into a spiritual state. The axiom in theosophy is the numerous, thousands and millions of transplants of man and the being of his immortal part, the Monad in various physical bodies, epochs and social environments. In general, the direction of this eternal wandering of the Monad is from God or Brahman to man and again to Brahman. The purpose of this wandering has an extremely moral character – the immortal part of man must go through all possible potentiality, reunite with the perfection of the Absolute, and continue its development at a higher stage in another higher evolution than the eternal movement of The universe. One has to overcome the duality of good and evil by progressively reaching the awareness of the divine particle, of the Monad in itself, and eliminating everything that is not moral in itself. Individual change leads to a change in society and social conditions. This is the way to achieve the universal brotherhood and unity – the main purpose of the Helena Blavatsky Theosophical Society created in the 70s of the 19th century. In Volume 1 of *The Secret Doctrine*\(^3\) Elena Blavatsky notes: “In every new Manuatar (Period of Activity of the Universe, Action Against Oats of the Resting Period – Palau)\(^4\) there should be a limited number of Monads who are developing and becoming more and more advanced through the assimilation of many consecutive personalities. This is


\(^3\) Блаватская, Е. Теософский словарь: [https://www.e-reading.by/bookreader.php/6575/Blavatskaya-_Teosofskii_slovar%27.html](https://www.e-reading.by/bookreader.php/6575/Blavatskaya-_Teosofskii_slovar%27.html).
absolutely necessary for a view of the doctrine of Reincarnation and Karma (of the numerous reincarnations of the person and the Cause and Effect Act of his actions), and a gradual return of the human Monad to its source – absolute divine will. Thus, although the multitude of them that are little or very elevated, it is almost Monad in exhaustible, yet their number is limited, and everything in this universe of differentiation and marriage”.

The characteristics of the Monad, the monadic multitude according to The Secret Doctrine, are purely metaphysical. Although he calls for the evolution of the Monad, Blavatsky emphasizes the Monad’s constant, pointing out that the evolutionary and evolutionary change is about the personality, the ego that “hangs” on the Monad. This ego is evolving and perfected, guided by the perfect Monad: “The Monad can neither move nor evolve, nor even be subjected to the effects of the change of state through which it passes. Since it does not belong to this world or plan and can only be compared to an indestructible star of divine light or fire thrown on our Earth as a rescue belt of the persons who inhabit it. They have to take hold of it, and thus become involved with its divine nature, to reach immortality. By itself, the Monad will not attach itself to anything, and as a floating board will be attributed by the tireless stream of evolution to another incarnation”. The impersonal monk goes through many different forms of matter, and Blavatsky defines it as “Soul-Wandering”, which in the spirit of Kant’s philosophy passes “through different states not only of matter, but also of self-awareness and self-knowledge, or of apperception towards perception”.

About the proximity in the metaphysics of The Secret Doctrine and the transcendental philosophy of Immanuel Kant also testifies Blavatsky’s statement: “The Monad manifests itself from its spiritual state and mental consciousness, and skips the first two plans – too close to the Absolute (it is about Atma, Buddhi, and Manas – which in Eastern philosophy are the first or respectively fifth, sixth and seventh principle of the weekly division of people – my note) to allow combination with something at a lower level – it intervene directly on the mental plan (Manas – m.n.). But in the entire universe, there is no plan with wider horizons or a wider field of activity in its almost endless gradations, cognitive and self-knowledgeable qualities of that plan, which in turn has a smaller plan for each “form” than the Mineral Monad until this Monad bloomed by the evolution of the Divine Monad. But all this time, it is the same monad, distinguished only in its incarnations through consecutive cycles of partial or complete obfuscation of the spirit, or partial or complete scrutiny of matter – two antitheses of polarity, whether it rises in the mental spirituality, or descends into the depths of materiality.” For the Monad’s wanderings are eternal and they never end, even when the state of bliss described as Nirvana in eastern wisdom reaches, Elena Blavatsky, observes: “As human-free as it may be, the paranormal state, though it has a limit in Eternity. Once attained, this same Monad again emerges from this state as an even higher being and at a much higher level in order to re-start its cycle of sophisticated activity. The human mind at its present stage of development can not only fail to approach but can barely reach this plan of thought. The mind oscillates here, on the border of the unattainable Absoluteness and Eternity”.

The Monad in Blavatsky’s theosophy is a constant in the doctrine of the evolution of mankind in Seven races. “Race” refers not to the color of the skin and outer peculiarities of man, but to human civilization in its stages of development as a society with its economic, sociopsychological, cultural and spiritual characteristics. The anthropogenesis of The Secret Doctrine characterizes the First and Second Race of humanity as spiritual, like the beauties of beings in a spiritual state. The direction of cyclical evolution is to the ever greater sealing reached in our Fifth

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Race. Hence the reverse process of return to spiritual state and the transition to the more advanced sixth and seventh races of mankind on Earth. Throughout this process of millions of years of involution and evolution, the Monad is “the ever-present”, it is the immortal principle – the Hindu Atman who is present in man. The philosophical summary for the endless wanderings of the monk Elena Blavatsky presents: “The Monad begins its cycle of incarnations through the three objective kingdoms (mineral, plant, animal – m.n.) in a downward arc by virtue of the necessity it must step on the ascending arc of the sphere as a human. It is in the downward arc that the spiritual gradually becomes material. On the middle line of the foundation, Spirit and Matter are equilibrated in man. On the upward arc, the Spirit begins to reassert itself slowly at the expense of physical or matter, so at the end of the Seventh Race of the Seventh Circle the Monad will see itself so free of matter and its properties as it was at the beginning but gaining experience and the wisdom, the fruit of all her personal lives without their evil and seduction”

8. Conclusion

Metaphysical Monad and so combines a great extent understanding of Helena Blavatsky and Gottfried Leibniz. Blavatsky refers repeatedly to Leibniz’s Monadology, arguing: “Monads as properly derived them, Leibniz, are the essence of the prime things (...) Leibniz imagines Monads as elementary and indestructible units that are endowed with the power to bestow and perception with respect to other units and thus define all spiritual and physical phenomena. It was he who coined the term apperception, which together with feeling (more knowledge) nerve express condition of Monad consciousness in the way of all through all the kingdoms of man”

Theosophical doctrine of Elena Blavatsky lies on the well-established philosophical traditions of both East and Western civilization. Evidence in this direction is not the subject of this statement, but for its purposes, the following quote from The Secret Doctrine, which deals with the general root of the metaphysical essence of the Monad in Eastern Wisdom and Isaac Newton’s philosophy, is made. The different currents of Indian philosophy call in different ways the seven principles of man. In general terms they are: Physical body (Rupa or Sthula Sarira), Astral body (Linga Sarira), Ethereal body (Prana), Mental – divided by the Animal (Kama Rupa) and the Human Soul (Manas), Budhi (Spiritual Soul) and Atma (the Divine Wish, the essence and manifestation of Brahman, the impersonal, absolute, omnipresent, unchangeable essence). As mentioned above, counting is done from above upwards or downwards, so in each case, Atma-Buddhi is the Sixth and Seventh Principle or First and Second Principles. In connection with the Monad essence Helena Blavatsky compares Spiritual Monad Newton’s understanding of Monad in Indian philosophy: “Two senior principles cannot have individuality on Earth, cannot be human if not (a) Mind Manas-Lo, for to realize himself, and (b) an earthly, false Person or Body, selfish desires and personal Will to secure the whole ensemble as an axis – as in fact – in the physical form of man. It is the fifth and fourth “principles” – Manas and Kama Rupa make up the dual personality; the true immortal Ego if it has been assimilated with the two higher principles and the false transient Personality, majestic (illusory, our physical body) or the animal-human Soul – these two principles must be closely matched to a complete human existence. Embodied Spiritual Monad of Newton, fixing it at the most perfect holy man on Earth, in the most perfect present available in our imagination a physical body – so body is composed of two and even three principles, by Shula Sharira, Prana (life principle) and Linga Sarira – but if there are no middle and fifth “principles”, you will create only an idiot – at the brand, case lovely creature, soulless,

empty unconscious visibility, “Cogito ergo sum” (I think, therefore I exist) cannot arise in the brain of such a nature”22.

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