

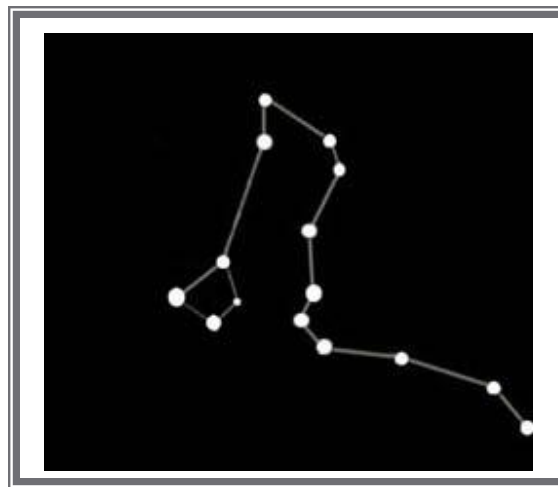
THE IMPERISHABLE STAR

O.S. UPDATE: MAY 2017

Welcome!

Welcome to the first official newsletter of the Order of the Serpent: The Imperishable Star! The Order of the Serpent (O.S.) is an order dedicated to the study of the Western Esoteric Tradition, specifically the Left Hand Path. We are dedicated to the advancement of esoteric studies and practices, and share freely and openly for all to study and use. Currently the greatest means to this end is the Order's official forum, which owes its existence to the unyielding efforts of co-founder Onyx. The forum provides a much needed venue to openly discuss the Western Left Hand Path in an educated manner. Individuals from all walks of life are welcome to ask question about and discuss the WLHP, so long as they remain respectful of forum rules and members. There is indeed a locked forum for members only, but this acts more as a ground for drafts, such as of this newsletter before release, rather than the hiding of any information. Not only does the Order not believe in hiding being closed doors like outdated organizations, we are free to join, our works are free to read, and there is no initiatory hierarchy whereby members are actively judged. We are simply individuals tired of the games played by the majority of the community, who simply

want to get down to the bare bones of esoteric discussion without all the nonsense. It also provides a moderated venue, one that cannot be spammed by the alt-right, that will not tolerate fascist ideologies, which will make every effort to keep discussion civil and information accurate.



Now that the forum is in place comes the next step: this newsletter. Like the name of the Order, the name of this newsletter relates to the northern circumpolar stars, the original focus of human spirituality, which never set below the horizon and stand free from the cycles of the moon, planets, and stars. As discussed, this newsletter will

remain free, a method of adding open-source knowledge into the esoteric world for contemplation and discussion. Outside of Order updates, the newsletter will also provide esoteric and academic-level works from members, most of whom come from drastically different backgrounds. We hope that in these pages you will find knowledge and inspiration, rituals to use and facts to investigate. After all, the path of darkness leads to enlightenment, so dive in, and like the Ancient Serpent, so too may you endure!

SETIAN FAQ

ANSWERS BY SETAMONTET

What is a Setian?

The Setian is a Black Magician who strives and works towards becoming attuned to his/her own Higher Self, who strives and works to become his/her complete and absolute manifestation in the Universe. The Setian is a spiritual Alchemist who, through the Black Work - the process of Self-directed Self-evolution - is transformed from a mortal into the essence of divinity. The primordial source for this refined consciousness is that which is known as the Prince of Darkness, whom we Setians identify as the ancient Egyptian god Set.

“XEPER HAPPENED TO ME ON THAT NIGHT WHEN I FIRST INVOKED THE NAME OF SET IN A WORKING OF GREATER BLACK MAGIC, AND CAME INTO BEING AS A SETIAN.”

Why Set?

Set was the ancient Egyptian Neter or god of winds, storms, chaos, war, disruption of the cosmic stasis, and the god of Darkness and of the Sky by Night. Set was originally honored and worshipped as a powerful Neter, whose kingdom was the majesty of the night sky, which he ruled from his Seat behind the Constellation of the Seven Stars or Ursa Major. Set is one of the most ancient and noble semblances of That which is also called Satan or the Devil, Prometheus, Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, etc. Its names and faces are many.

Set's Name ultimately means the Isolator or Separator, to Set Apart, which also makes him a perfect Lord of

the Left-Hand Path. As Set separated him Self from the laws of the Order of the Cosmos, so too have we who walk this path consciously rejected and have separated and liberated ourselves from socially established norms, the conventional, the traditional ebb and flow of society, popular culture and conventional religion and morality.

What is Xeper?

Xeper is an ancient Egyptian verb/noun (pronounced Khefr) written as a stylized scarab beetle, which in English roughly translates as “To Become” or “To Evolve” or, “I Have Come Into Being”. We all have within ourselves our own individual hidden truths of higher being. The path and quest of Xeper is to uncover and to ultimately become the very embodiment, and most complete and supreme manifestation, of these truths.

“Xeper is the experience of an individual psyche becoming aware of its own existence and deciding to expand and evolve that existence through its own actions.” It is a dynamic spiritual transformation in one's life, in which the horizons of the potentiality of one's own being expands. It is the establishment of a new higher mode or state of existence. Xeper, like in Alchemy, is the transformation of the soul or psyche from a lower state or base element into that of a higher state or divine element.

Xeper happens. For instance, Xeper happened to me on that day when I first truly heard that piece of music which would inspire me to devote the next eight + years of my life learning music theory and piano technique. Xeper happened to me on that night when I first invoked the Name of Set in a Working of Greater Black Magic, and Came Into Being as a Setian. In those moments of dynamic spiritual transformation, major

paradigms in my life were shifted and I was changed forever. Xeper is that which transformed humans from what we were millions of years ago to that which we are today, and which will continue to transform us into other forms. Hence, it occurs on both a macrocosmic (racial) and a microcosmic (individual) level. Xeper continues to occur through the Remanifestation of these transformations of being.

What is Remanifestation?

Remanifestation is another essential aspect of Setian philosophy and the path of Xeper. It is what we do after Xeper happens, after a higher state of existence has become established. It is through the continual exercise and application of the knowledge, powers, and abilities which we have attained thus far, to our continuing work, which enables us to uncover even deeper mysteries, develop stronger more refined abilities, and to establish new higher states of existence. Without Remanifestation, Xeper would only be a single event happening. Xeper and Remanifestation, in essence, is the food for the soul; we Come Into Being and continually feed and nurture that Being through the exercise of the re-energized Black Flame. This is the process of self-directed self-evolution.

What is the significance of Darkness?

Darkness is more than just the absence of light, it observably envelopes the entire Universe. It symbolizes the Mysteries, the unknown, the secret knowledge, that which is hidden, also the infinite potential of the self-aware Being, and that which is not-yet-manifest or Is-to-Be in the realms of Black Magic. As Don Webb once described the Path of Darkness: “In this darkling universe there are no lights save for those you create through your hard work, your spiritual rebellion, your seeking after the mysteries of your own choosing. When that light dawns, it will by its very nature not only give you moments of clarity about things in your life closest to you, it will likewise show you new horizons – horizons for you and you alone to explore.”

What is the Black Flame?

The term “Black Flame” appeared in modern times in Michael Aquino’s document “The Diabolicon,” where Lucifer came down from Heaven and infused within all mankind the essence of his mind. When doing this, the

radiance of Lucifer’s mind radiated out across the Earth in the form of brilliant rays of black light.

The Black Flame is the Essence of Set within us, it is that which initiates and inspires the Will to Come Into Being, it is the energizing force of the Will to Magic, Self-Consciousness, and higher intellect; it is the very essence of being within all self-aware entities. All understanding of science and mathematics, independent, abstract, and creative thought such as inventiveness, philosophy, metaphysics, religion; all music and works of art; all expressions of the creative mind and will are spawns or manifestations of the Black Flame. It is that which gives us a higher sense of Self just like other animals have a more heightened sense of sight, smell, and sound. This is the nature of the Black Flame which, having become infused within our very DNA, is actually the so called “Sixth Sense”.

What is Black Magic?

Black Magic is the Willful confounding and alteration of the universal laws of the Cosmos. It is the Art of altering or changing the subjective universe in order to produce a proportionate change in the objective universe in accordance with the Will. Setian Magic is divided into lesser and greater degrees of manifestation, Lesser Black Magic (LBM) and Greater Black Magic (GBM). Lesser Black Magic is the manipulation or influencing of events, situations, people, in the everyday world by the Magician in order to produce a desired outcome.

There is a three-fold dynamic in the practice of Greater Black Magic:

1. Origination – all Magic originates and begins in the mind, abstract and subjective thought.
2. Manifestation – the refinement of the subjective Will through Ritual Magic employed by the Magician so that his/her Will is known to the Universe.
3. Crystallization – the realization of the subjective Will into a definite form, woven into the warp and weave of the objective universe. Subjective thoughts and ideas become objective reality.

***Xeper and Remanifest.
/Setamontet\
Magister Ordo Serpentis***

ANSWERS BY ONYX

What is a Setian?

Conventional religions seek to exchange individuality for a comforting sense of safety in numbers. The Setian, by contrast, is a dedicated Black Magician who rejects becoming absorbed into the universe, but rather works to glorify, expand, and preserve his or her own unique identity and self-awareness.

Why Set?

Set is an ancient Egyptian god of chaos and darkness. He was the god of the night sky, storms, etc. Set was depicted as a very unusual creature with no earthly counterpart, owing to his importance as a representation of all things unnatural, unpredictable, and hidden.

If we consider the consciousness to be the unnatural side of the metaphysical mind/body experience, then Set may be accurately viewed as the transcendental origin thereof. Set offers no grace or hand-holding, but is able to reveal one's higher potential when apprehended.

What is Xeper?

The word Xeper (or Kheper) means "to come into being," and is related to the self-created Egyptian god Khepri.

Xeper represents advancement in the evolution of the psyche through the force of will. Something may inspire someone to embark on a new personal quest, but it is up to the individual to see it through to completion.

What is Remanifestation?

Remanifestation is made evident when something is repeated over and over. What was initially gained through Xeper is extended through Remanifestation, resulting in an even greater expansion of the consciousness and sense of selfhood.

What is the significance of Darkness?

Great things may be discovered in darkness: rare artifacts in tombs, new cosmic discoveries, etc. The psyche is a dark place few dare to explore, but the Black Magician boldly embarks down the dark corridors of the mind and seeks out the hidden treasures within.

**“SET MAY BE ACCURATELY VIEWED
AS THE TRANSCENDENTAL ORIGIN
[OF CONSCIOUSNESS].”**

What is the Black Flame?

The Black Flame is the Magical gift of self-awareness, which allows humans to formulate their own thoughts and come to their own conclusions.

As it is separate from the natural order, it cannot be fueled by it. It is therefore the responsibility of the Setian to re-ignite the Black Flame through Xeper and Remanifestation, lest it die out.

What is Black Magic?

There are two forms of Black Magic:

Lesser Black Magic (LBM) is employed to influence a particular outcome in the Objective realm through direct, often subtle manipulation of people, places, and things.

Greater Black Magic (GBM) is the alteration of the Subjective experience of the Magician, which will instantiate a reflection of that change in the Objective realm if the Working is successful.

ANSWERS BY XEPERA MASET

What is a Setian, and Why Set?

A Setian is a henotheist who focuses on gods of consciousness over gods of order. Set is the main focus as the god of isolate consciousness, the Platonic Form of the individual, self-aware Self. H Te Velde gives three roles for the god Set in *Seth: God of Confusion*: a trickster type god of confusion, of god of isolation and separation, and a god of intoxication. By looking at these three faces of Set, we can see why Set is a good representative for this isolate consciousness. To our knowledge the vast majority of life and matter goes about what it does unthinkingly, like a planet on its orbit, a plant growing towards the sun, or an animal hunting for food and making shelter. It is only with isolate consciousness that humans come to experience the confusion of questions like purpose and meaning. We do not go about like a star in orbit, but have reason and doubt, much to the terror of the Hermeticists. Isolation and separation is rather self-explanatory, and is the way I most commonly see Set. Human-like consciousness is something cut off from the rest of the world, from other conscious beings. At any given moment what one is consciously aware of may be anything from every day moments to unimaginable, unrealistic vistas only imaginable by that single individual. And intoxication, well, there's a reason most of us would not give drugs to children, or even most animals. It's a way to effect

consciousness, and something for consenting, informed individuals to engage in.

What is Xeper and What is Remanifestation?

Xeper is a type of personal evolution. It is a static verb basically, something English does not have. Xeper is something always happening, whether you control it or not, whether you recognize it or not, and all things undergo some form of Xeper. The goal in Setianism is to control Xeper willfully and recognize it, but this is a henotheistic preference, and not some monotheistic dogma. People are welcome to do what they want and

focus on what they want. Remanifestation is a word for when Xeper occurs that had occurred previously, comparable to what happens when you rediscover a band you used to love.

“XEPER IS SOMETHING ALWAYS HAPPENING, WHETHER YOU CONTROL IT OR NOT, WHETHER YOU RECOGNIZE IT OR NOT.”

What are Black Magic and the Black Flame?

These are the terms used by Dr. Michael Aquino to describe certain universal ideas. The black flame is comparable to the kundalini serpent, the Ka of Egypt, a divine spark of any sort, and so on. Black magic is self-directed self-evolution, not being swept up in the flow of deterministic and mechanistic nature, but separating and isolating yourself from that and directing your own path.



RISE AND FALL OF THE WORLD IN RELIGIOUS MYTHOLOGY

WRITTEN BY AGAPE THERION

The creation myths of all religions can be divided into two general categories, these being the myth of the Fall, and the myth of the Rise. A myth of the Fall type is like that of the Fall of Man depicted in Genesis. These consist of reality beginning in a perfect state, then degrading into the modern world. A myth of the Rise type is like that of the Greek rise of the gods. These consist of reality being originally chaotic, but becoming better through triumph, usually that of a divinity. Mythologies of the Fall type include Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Yugic Hinduism, and mythologies of the Rise type include Norse, Greek, and Thelemic paganism.



In the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), Adam and Eve are tempted into sin, thus disuniting themselves from God, and in some interpretations cursing their children for generations. This narrative goes that the highest power (usually called Elohim in Genesis) created a perfect “Garden of Delight” (Eden) in which his creations could live in peace, without working the fields or going to war for farmland. Everything at the beginning of the universe was perfect. God gave humanity an option to opt out of this perfect existence, by eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Eve, tempted by a serpent (later associated with Satan), ate the fruit of the tree and gave some to Adam as well. In this way, they gain the ability to choose what is right or wrong, and are cast out from paradise and into the world, in which they must toil for food, and in which murder and other crimes exist.

In Yugic Hinduism, the first age of the universe was the Satya Yuga, in which all people practiced one religion, all people were saints, and there was no disease or lack of health. The Yugas beyond this become increasingly depraved, culminating in the destruction of the world by Vishnu in his incarnation as Kalki, the Destroyer of Filth. The world is then said to be reborn pure, in an eternal cycle of decay and (re)birth. The fact that this ideology has attracted such proponents as Julius Evola (who called himself a “superfascist”) and Savitri Devi (who believed Adolf Hitler was Kalki) speaks a lot to the nature of the Fall type mythology.

Mythologies of the Fall would be categorized by Nietzsche as those with “slave morality”, that is, moral systems which encourage docile behavior. It is notable that the majority of such ideologies came with strict rules and regulations. Judaism forbids such trivial things as mixed fabrics, the eating of shellfish, and the keeping of images depicting gods. Yugic Hinduism, often advocated by the esoteric branch of Nazi intellectuals, advocates a stratified society in which the warrior, priest, and other classes never mix. The use of these ideologies to manipulate others is even apparent from their origin texts.

Moses, after declaring the laws of God, uses his power over the Hebrews to kill the inhabitants of Israel in order to conquer it as the “holy land”. The stratified class system of Yugic Hinduism had harsh punishments for people who mixed class, especially directed at those in lower classes, and thus was highly manipulative of the lowest rungs of the social order.

In Norse paganism, the universe is created by the mixing of two chaotic bodies, the fire in the South, and the ice in the North. This starts a complex process which leads to the emanation of the first two people, the giants, and the gods. The world thus rises from the union of two things which are useless in and of themselves. In the end, the world will fall into chaos again, and the gods will die, but humanity will survive. This aspect shows that the gods were not inherently more powerful than humans, but that each worked through the power of the other, and that humans are ultimately the victorious species. Certain aspects of Norse culture, as with most ancient cultures, were restrictive (such as its forbidding of a man to play the receiving role in homosexual intercourse, but not the giving), but for the most part, Norse culture had fewer taboos than Fall mythologies.

In Greek myth, the chaotic and cruel Titans are overthrown by their children, the gods, in the Titanomachy. This contrasts heavily with the related Roman myths, in which Cronus (called Saturn by the Romans) was not cruel, but rather a benevolent god who led a Golden Age similar to the

Eden narrative. Greek myth, in contrast, has generations of deities getting successively less cruel across time. The first two gods, Uranus and Gaia, were monstrous in nature, and not far off from the Old Ones of Lovecraftian lore. They were overthrown by the Titans, roughly a dozen gods who were the children of Gaia. They were only marginally more reasonable, and were in turn overthrown by their own children. The god Zeus is more reasonable than the last two generations, though he angers easily and often punishes people and gods when they disobey him. This can be seen as a merely human aspect of his nature though, showing that the gods are not so far above human morality. Humanity in the beginning was in a desolate state, with no ability to do much of anything, until the Titan (and subsequent martyr) Prometheus brings them the power of fire, straight from Zeus himself. In this way, Greek mythology fulfills the image of Baphomet created by Eliphas Levi, of the twin powers of destruction (Solve) and creation (Coagula) usurped from the gods and given to (or taken by) humanity. The ancient Greeks, however, also had a strong belief in fate, which is contradictory to the powers of humanity attributed by many of their myths.

**“FALL MYTHOLOGIES ARE INFERIOR
IN TERMS OF GRANTED WILLPOWER
TO THAT OF RISE MYTHOLOGIES...”**

Finally, Thelema postulates that the origin of the world lies in the union of two opposites, the vast emptiness of pure possibility, and the infinitely small and dense point of pure actuality. This union, sexual in nature, creates the universe. Each of these religions has forms which are far more liberating than the Fall ideologies. Norse, Greek, and Egyptian myth all have stories in which humans are able to overcome the forces of nature and of gods. However, they each also postulate the existence of fate, stripping people of free will, but in Thelema, humans are generally considered on a similar playing field as gods, in some cases being or becoming them, and certainly working with or against them. As such, it seems that Thelema is a superior example of “master morality” (the term used by Nietzsche to describe a system that produces self-reliant individuals) than any other system discussed in this essay.

Seeing that Fall mythologies are inferior in terms of granted willpower to that of Rise mythologies, and those to specific ideologies such as Thelema, Satanism, and Setianism, it seems most appropriate for those seeking to perfect their own will to employ the ideas of the latter. In contrast, the former are best for being manipulated, or for manipulating others. However, this should be taken a step farther. In seeking Apotheosis of the will, each person should, as Crowley phrased it, “Resurrect a Holy Kabbala from nothing,” that is to say, each person should create their own practices and methods.

The greatest practitioners of all schools of thought were the ones who transcended tradition and made their own practices and methodologies. In such seemingly unrelated fields as modern biology, ancient religion, and literature, those who

“THE GREATEST PRACTITIONERS OF ALL SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT WERE THE ONES WHO TRANSCENDED TRADITION AND MADE THEIR OWN PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGIES”

came up with their own systems of behavior and methodologies of achieving success are the most remembered. In biology, Gregor Mendel is hailed as the founder of modern genetics, but was misunderstood at the time of his life because he did something new in regards to biology: he utilized statistics to understand his own research. In ancient religion, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad influenced the modern world to action in three different and unique ways. Moses was the founder of one of the first monotheisms, the only other two

notable examples being that of Zoroaster and Akhenaten. His approaches were radical for the time, as the Hebrews had been polytheistic for many hundreds of years prior to his teaching of monotheism, and as a result he is one of the forefathers of the vast majority of modern Western religions. Jesus was radical for his time, advocating pacifism and love in warring and treacherous period of history. Muhammad was radical because of his recombination of Judaism, Christianity, and Arab myths, perhaps one of the first advocates of an original syncretism. Finally, Miguel de Cervantes was the inventor of the novel, the artist behind Don Quixote, a fantastic work showing the survival of the mythical age through one man's insanity and effort to preserve it.

The benefits of utilizing both original methodologies and Rise mythologies is clear from the study of comparative religion and the history of great men and women. As a result, the best ideology for an advocate of the Left Hand Path of occultism are the personally beneficial rituals (loosely defined) and Rise-type myths.



PLATONISM AND MATHEMATICS

WRITTEN BY MERYTSETH

A Brief Background on Elementary Algebra

As a mathematician, I spend a lot of time thinking about numbers as an abstract concept. The practice of mathematics, in its truest sense, is merely the application of pure reason, and in this sense numbers aren't necessary for mathematics to be "true" at all. In the study of abstract algebra, we find that, to a large extent, even binary operations like addition and multiplication can be studied without distinction, as a generalized, abstract binary operation that could be interpreted any number of ways.

"AS A MATHEMATICIAN, I SPEND A LOT OF TIME THINKING ABOUT NUMBERS AS AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT."

Consider for example the Dihedral group D_3 . This is the group of rotations on an equilateral triangle. Given a triangle with labeled "corners," you can rotate the triangle once or twice, but rotating the triangle three times results in the original triangle again. Now, imagine picking the triangle up and flipping it over. You can flip the triangle over once, but if you flip it again, you will get back what you started with.

Think of multiplication with "regular" numbers. We have what is called the "multiplicative identity," namely 1. Anything multiplied by 1 gives back that same thing. Now, the Dihedral group D_3 has an identity, as all groups do, and we call it e . (Not to be confused with the irrational number e). If we call the operation of rotating the triangle r and the operation of flipping it over t , then we can say that $r^3 = e$, and $t^2 = e$. This, then, tells us that $r^3 = t^2$, and so we can start to construct algebraic relations between the rotations and flips of a triangle, and any number of complicated patterns of rotations and flips can be simplified down to rather concise expressions. This isn't a binary operation in the sense of normal addition or subtraction, but we can treat it as one (with some restrictions – the binary operation in the Dihedral group isn't commutative, for instance).

Think of the common binary operations in mathematics. Addition, the process by which the values of "numbers" are combined to produce new "numbers." Subtraction can be thought of as simply addition with negative numbers. Multiplication, in a way, can be thought of as "repeated addition." In other words, we can think of any number $x * y$ as "x added to itself y times" or vice versa. This comparison, however, breaks down when we think of division as the multiplication of reciprocals. You can't add something to itself $\frac{1}{2}$ times after all, can you? Similarly, to an extent one can think of exponentiation as "repeated multiplication" (\times as "x times itself y times"), but in the case of fractional exponents, this too breaks down. So, the relationship between the familiar binary operations aren't as straightforward as they would seem to be – or, perhaps more to the point, the integers, or even just the natural numbers (the counting numbers) aren't quite what they seem.

The natural numbers are the "counting" numbers: $\mathbf{N} = \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$. Some math texts define a set of "whole" numbers to be the naturals together with zero, and others define a set $\mathbf{N}^* = \{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ to fill this purpose. The naturals are contained within the "whole" numbers, and both are contained within the integers, $\mathbf{Z} = \{\dots -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$. In order to talk about multiplicative inverses, and thus any division at all, one needs to go a step further than this, and define the set of rational

numbers, $\mathbf{Q} = \{ a/b \text{ such that } a, b \text{ are integers} \}$. This is probably far enough to give sufficient context for a discussion of Platonism in mathematics – beyond the rationals we have the reals, \mathbf{R} , which are notoriously difficult to deal with because most of them are irrational (and transcendental, thus not algebraic), and beyond this the complex numbers \mathbf{C} , which includes the reals together with the imaginary unit i , defined as $i^2 = -1$, and is surprisingly well behaved compared to the reals.

So, binary operations like addition and multiplication seem to obey some sort of order regarding how they relate to each other, but this ordering seems to break down when we're forced to think of numbers we can't "count" on apples or fingers. This is one of the subtleties of arithmetic that is frequently overlooked – mathematics isn't just special cases of counting apples, but counting apples is perhaps one of the more familiar applications – until you need to give someone, say the square root of two apples, and then you'll run into some difficulty.

Mathematical Realism

One of the fundamental questions of the philosophy of math is "does math itself exist as a part of the universe, wherein it is merely discovered by humans, or is math invented by humans?" The area of Mathematical Realism claims that yes, mathematics exists independent of the human mind. Clearly, a necessary first step would be to determine whether the natural numbers exist (proving that the primes exist would suffice, but it turns out it is a little easier to simply construct the naturals together with zero). The naturals, together with zero, are the building blocks upon which all other numbers are defined, and while mathematics certainly can be done without the use of numbers, arguably the construction of mathematical identities without numbers as first principles is not possible.

To this end, think of a number, say, for example, 3. Does 3 *exist*? Certainly one could have a collection of 3 objects, or, to put it in a Platonic sense, one could have a collection of objects having the *Form* of 3. It is under this abstraction that we claim the natural numbers exist at all, and – at a basic level, one could say that it would suffice to describe the forms of only the prime numbers. The number 8, for instance, is constructed from forms of 2 ($2*2*2 = 8$) and arguably 3 (since $2^3 = 8$). The fundamental theorem of arithmetic tells us that any natural number greater than one can be written as a finite product of primes.

A Set Theoretic Construction of the Natural Numbers

One of the most useful areas of mathematics is set theory (no relation to Set the Egyptian Neter or Form of isolate consciousness). A set is merely a collection of objects called *elements*, with no structure or order. Sets have a *cardinality*, the number of elements they contain, and we can talk about *subsets*, that is, a set whose elements can all be found in some other set (the naturals are a subset of the integers, for instance). We can use set theory to construct the natural numbers.

**“DOES MATH ITSELF EXIST AS A PART
OF THE UNIVERSE, WHEREIN IT IS
MERELY DISCOVERED BY HUMANS, OR
IS MATH INVENTED BY HUMANS?”**

A critical note: a set itself can be an element of another set. In this case, the set is counted as a single element, regardless of its cardinality.

The most basic, and arguably trivial, set is called the empty set: $\{ \}$. It is usually denoted as \emptyset . The first axiom of set theory is that the empty set exists. It contains no elements, and since every set has a cardinality by its definition, we call this cardinality zero.

Next, consider the set containing the empty set: $\{ \emptyset \}$. This set has a cardinality that is not the same as the cardinality of the empty set (it has an element), so we call its cardinality 1. This construction of one will be the block on which all the other naturals are constructed.

Then, we take the following set: $\{ \emptyset, \{ \emptyset \} \}$, and we call its cardinality 2 (it contains two elements – the empty set, and the *set containing the empty set*).

In other words, we take the previous set, and then add *that set itself* as an element to an otherwise identical set. If we call the cardinality of the original set c , then our new set necessarily has a cardinality of $c + 1$.

Next, we would construct the set $\{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}, \{\emptyset, \{\emptyset\}\}\}$, and call this cardinality 3 (its elements are the empty set, the set containing the empty set, and the set from the previous step).

By continuing this way, we can construct the natural numbers using increasingly nested sets of sets of empty sets. As far as constructing the natural numbers goes, this is just about the most abstract way to do it, and to return to apple-counting, in a deep sense, we count apples by comparing the cardinality of a set of apples to the cardinal numbers associated with these nested empty sets. These *cardinal numbers* we call the naturals.

Does this answer the question “does 3 exist?” It certainly answers the question “can 3 be constructed?” However, pi is a transcendental number, meaning that it *cannot* be constructed from first principles (in this case, constructed from straightedge and compass, a la Euclid), and yet if numbers exist, pi indisputably does.

“MATHEMATICAL PLATONISM REFERS
TO A METAPHYSICAL
INTERPRETATION OF MATHEMATICS
CONCERNING THE EXISTENCE OF
MATHEMATICAL ONTOLOGY.”

Think, then, about the *Form* of each natural number. We can think of these cardinal numbers as having a Platonic form (for example, the form of 3), then it is not hard to see that if an abstract structure with the form of a natural number can be constructed, then numbers *must therefore exist* – in that a *form which does not exist cannot be constructed*.

In this way we can surmise from the Theory of Forms that *constructibility implies existence* (the converse, however, is not true – existence does not imply constructibility, as is the case of pi and the other transcendentals).

Mathematical Platonism

Mathematical Platonism refers to a metaphysical interpretation of mathematics concerning the existence of mathematical ontology. It is based, primarily, on three theses:

- *Existence*, that is, some mathematical ontology does exist.
- *Abstractness*, that is, mathematical ontology is abstract.
- *Independence*, that is, mathematical ontology is independent of the activities of rational beings.

Items which are fundamental to mathematical ontology are called objects. In the sense of Platonism, these objects must then exist, be abstract, and be independent of rational activity. Do the natural numbers (together with zero) satisfy these conditions?

Abstractness of the Natural Numbers

Since the natural numbers are constructible, they exist, as previously discussed, which satisfies the first condition. Are they abstract? This is a complex term, and there are a number of conditions by which abstractness is determined:

- **Non-spatio-temporality.** Another way to state this is that an abstract object does not exist in the Objective Universe (OU).

- Numbers do not exist in the OU. You cannot pick up “3” and hold it. However, relations between abstract objects may hold in the OU, such as in the case of binary operations, even when they are not directly demonstrable.
- **Acausality.** An abstract object does not exert a causal influence over any other object, nor does any other object have a causal influence over it.
 - One can change the wavelength of light by which the precise color “royal blue” is defined, or the number of carbon atom widths that determine the length of a meter, or the oscillations of a cesium atom defining one second – none of these things change the meaning of the numbers themselves. “3” always means the same thing, even if you pick up a fourth apple.
- **Eternality.** This may either mean that the abstract object exists for all of time, or the object exists outside temporal relations.
 - This is an interesting question: is the dimension of time necessary for mathematics to exist? It is certainly necessary for the practice of mathematics - as any student of math can attest to, there never seems to be enough of it.

Since mathematics has been used since the dawn of human history, and even outside the context of human history – for example, when the solar system was formed from a collapsing solar nebula, a central protostar and a number of planetessimals formed from the collapsing gas and dust. Even though this lies well outside the realm of human history, and we may never know the precise number of planetessimals initially formed in the solar nebula, reason tells us that this must have been a natural number. Planetessimals are discrete objects, and the cardinality of a set of them can be compared to cardinal numbers of sets.

For this reason and many others, it is clear to me that the natural numbers either exist for all time, or that they exist outside time. Personally, I lean toward the former as being the more accurate statement, but an argument can be made for the latter.

- **Changelessness.** That is, the intrinsic properties of the item will not change.
 - As far as we can tell, going back to Babylonian mathematics, and even farther back to earliest systems of counting, while the names for the numbers may have changed, the number that we understand as “3” has always been of the same form. Moreover, a statement such as “3 is prime” has always been true, and shall always be true.
- **Necessary existence.** The abstract object could not have failed to exist.
 - So long as the OU can be reduced to any sort of discrete components (clusters, galaxies, stars, planets, molecules, atoms, particles), the natural numbers cannot fail to exist. Note that this is not contingent upon atomism – the components need not be irreducible to be countable. For example, let S be a set of infinitely many elements. A set containing S, and only S, has *finitely* many elements; namely, one.

Independence of Rational Activity

The most common way to explain independence is to say that “X is independent of Y.” That is, X would continue to exist even if Y did not. In the case of the natural numbers, an example would be that the natural numbers would continue to exist even without humans to do arithmetic with them.

Even deeper, the independence thesis states that the properties of these mathematical objects would continue to exist independent of rational activity. The statement that “3 is prime” would be true without anyone to attempt to find some other factor for it using Euler’s formula or some other method. 8, similarly, would always contain the properties of being equivalent to $2 * 2 * 2$, or $4+4$, or any number of other methods of arriving at the number, even if no rational mind existed to perform the calculation. That is to say, these relations are not reliant upon mathematical activities to reveal them. To use another astronomical example, the Chandrasekhar limit is the upper limit of the mass a white dwarf can have and not result in either a nova, or a supernova explosion. If a white dwarf is gravitationally gaining mass from a nearby red dwarf, for instance, one does not need to compute this limit in order for the inevitable result to occur once it is reached.

By these features, we can say that the natural numbers, together with zero, are an example of a mathematical ontology. From these, we can summarily construct the integers, and from the integers, the rationals, and from these, we can construct the ordered field we call the real numbers, and from these, the complex. Kronecker once famously stated that “God created the natural numbers, all else is the work of man.” I cannot concur with his attribution, but that the natural numbers exist outside of the influence of reason seems clear.

- The existence of the natural numbers is a consequence of the set-theoretic axiom that the empty set exists.
- Therefore, since the natural numbers can be constructed from the empty set alone, the natural numbers exist.
- If the natural numbers exist, they are abstract objects, independent of rational activities.
- This is, by definition, arithmetic-object Platonism, and we may conclude that mathematical ontologies up to and including the complex numbers, along with all related binary operations, do exist.

Addendum: Mathematical Ontology and the Argument for Set

According to “The Comprehensive Argument for Set” as stated by Xepera maSet, we have the following logical sequence:

- A form of consciousness must exist if the Theory of Forms is true.
- The attributes [of certain Forms] compose the attributes of polytheistic gods.
- The best god to represent the Form of consciousness is Set.
- Set exists.

Since the existence of these mathematical ontologies seems to reinforce the argument that the Theory of Forms is true, this would seem to support the existence of Set as the Form of Isolate Consciousness.

COMPREHENSIVE ARGUMENT FOR SET

WRITTEN BY XEPERA MASET

The Argument for Set

1. The conscious Self axiomatically exists, this cannot be denied.
 2. The objective, material world also exists, and even if it does not we should act as though it does.
 3. The brain/objective material world and the mind have different properties, and are therefore not identical or reducible to one another. Even if the mind emerges from the brain it is something separate.
 4. The Theory of Forms is the best way to understand the world we live in and to address the mind-body problem of premise 3.
 5. A Form of consciousness must exist if the Theory of Forms is true.
 6. The attributes of this Form match those of polytheistic Gods.
 7. The best God to represent this Form of consciousness is the Egyptian God Set.
- .∴ Therefore, Set Exists.

“WE START WITH WHAT WE CAN BE CERTAIN OF: THE STATEMENT OF EACH SELF-AWARE BEING THAT ‘I EXIST.’”

Premise 1: We start with what we can be certain of: the statement of each self-aware being that “I exist.” Self-existence is the only thing we can be 100% certain of, and it is the only thing we directly know. All else is known through this “self,” even one’s own experiences! Further, this self-existence seems to be axiomatic, meaning that we cannot reason without relying on it being true. This means that the default, starting position is solipsism.

Premise 2: Is there good reason to reject solipsism? Absolutely. We have consistent evidence of a stable,

objective world that all individuals inhabit. Science and the achievements of human beings further confirm the existence of this objective world, for they would not be possible if we existed within some sort of random chaos. Next, it seems that other people we interact with, even other animals, seems to have internal experiences similar to ours. They seem to have emotion, to be self-aware, to have their own opinions, fantasies, and so on separate from our own. Yet the solipsist may still say that this does not prove the position incorrect, that it is simply a hallucination. To that we must say that pragmatically speaking this position is absolutely and utterly useless. If this is the case, if we are some sort of brain-in-a-vat, we know no other reality, and this one seems to clearly affect us. If we are in this vat, we likely have no possible way of

acting otherwise, and so it is beneficial to treat the external world as true. If one must consider this a “leap of faith” then so be it.

Premise 3: Now, it seems that the internal experience of individuals which do not directly interact, and the external world we all interact with, are wholly different things. The most compelling evidence of this is property dualism, which shows that the mind and objective, physical world are categorically different. Let’s look at several examples: mental events do not have spacial dimensions where matter does, it is possible that matter is an illusion but impossible that one’s mind is an illusion (see premise 1), mental events deal with abstract objects but matter only deals with real particular objects, mental events are private but material events can be shared, subjective experience accompanies mental events but not material ones, the mind has intentionality but matter does not, the mind allows for free will but matter does not, and the mind is nonphysical but matter is physical. We can directly poke at anyone’s brain under the right conditions, but can literally never gain access to their experience. Yes, mind and brain are obviously deeply correlated, but correlation is not causation. How these two interact is known as the mind-body problem, and we will come back to it below.

Premise 4: For now we must diverge from this thought to provide a simple, confirmable, and logical worldview which can replace the failures of all monism due to the above facts. This is a modified Theory of Forms, which will take some discussion and patience to understand. Let us start simple. “Pointedness,” the characteristic of “having a point (as in physical point),” is the perfect example of a simple Form. Your coffee table, a nearby writing utensil, your television and computer, and many other things around you likely contain the characteristic of “having one or more physical points.” Yet the pointed objects are not, themselves, pointedness, which would violate the Law of Identity. Rather, both share in the same characteristic of “pointedness,” pointedness being something immaterial that we can never actually show in a physical sense (other than through different manifestations of the characteristic). Of course Forms of this nature should be simple to disprove if false, just show

“pointedness” to itself be physical, or that characteristics are not free of the mind.

Forms set the precedent for immaterial but objective things, related to yet distinct from the physical world, such as the self-conscious existence discussed above. In the Theory, if X exists then the Form of X exists, where the Form of X is the non-reducible, non-physical, core and defining property of physical property X, that is held by some physical object. Like with the points of the coffee table, because that specific characteristic exists, its Form exists, which is easily confirmed by the presence of the characteristic in other distinct objects. Yes, this means there is a theoretically infinite number of Forms. It also means that for each individual human being, there is a unique and distinct Form of the individual. Like all points partake in pointedness, there are several characteristic all human partake in, such as being conscious, existing in a physical body, lust, pride, strength, knowledge, and so forth. There must, then, be Forms for all of these characteristics.

If Forms and the material world coexist, it still does not explain consciousness itself, and therefore cannot address the mind-body problem (premise 3) in and of itself. Yet unlike physicalism which fails to propose any sort of mechanism, or idealism which fails to explain away the outside world, the Theory of Forms can indeed answer this question. Obviously Forms and matter must be connected in some way, like a point to pointedness, but what is this field which connects them? Dr. Michael A. Aquino suggests that consciousness/experience itself is this very field connecting brain to Form. At all levels of existence all things experience, even if not in a self-aware way. Experience can be as little as an equal and opposite reaction. Essentially for any one thing X there is something it is like to be X, which we can call Y. This does not mean we, personally, can ever experience Y, or that Y even has conscious experience in the way humans do. This is due to the fact that for any one thing X, there is a Form of X (and something it is like to be X). This explains matter, mind, and Form in a successful way.

What about materialism? Why is the mind connected to the brain? Why do changes in the brain correlate the mental changes? As we have known for quite a while now

thanks to evolutionary science, it is likely due to the complexity of our physical brain that we have such higher levels of consciousness compared to what we observe around us. Sure a single cell may only experience in the sense of stimulus reaction, but animals go far beyond that, and humans a step further. The field between the physical/chemical/biological individual and their Form is stronger specifically because of that physical complexity. Damage to the brain is like damaging a radio, no longer allowing it to receive a signal. Yet it does not imply anything more than that things have been scrambled, the signals do not cease to exist.

What about idealism? Why are Forms more likely than all being mind? Why is non-monism necessary in this case? It seems obvious that the strength of consciousness depends on the physical brain and body. Messing with that brain and body allows us to impact experience and consciousness. It is a far greater leapt to assume there is some all controlling mind constantly manifesting a consistent outer world, than that the world simply exists. Idealism also cannot address the mind-body problem due to the issues of property dualism. A third issue worth mentioning is that individuals seem to be discrete entities with isolate experience, not sharing in a single, unified consciousness.

So in what further ways can we show this Form of the individual exists, and how does this lead us to Set specifically? One rather simple way is to ask everyone reading this if they recognize their loved ones across time. Our entire physical bodies decay and are replicated several times over in life, and our personalities and experiences are consistently changing, yet we recognize individuals as themselves throughout their lives. We also, of course, recognize ourselves as something stable, despite all these physical and mental changes. This is because we inherently recognize the characteristics which make that individual themselves. In monism they are either a clump of identical fundamental matter or consciousness, and should be indistinguishable. It is because of their objective characteristics, their Forms, that we recognize them.

Further, Forms are necessary to explain the teleological electromagnetic fields proven by Dr. Harold Burr to

guide cell replication in humans. Dr. Burr showed that not only does his “life-field” exist, but that changes in this L-Field precede changes in the physical body. He further argued that mindless cell reproduction does not explain the consistent replication we see in the human body, which even changes to account for something like a loss of a limb or the addition of a tattoo. He believed that there must be an ordered telos, or purpose, to the human body, which the physical changes essentially followed. The cells “know what to do” in a way cells shouldn’t. Essentially, this “blueprint” is what the body grows into, and only falters if the blueprint breaks down. But unless we are willing to accept some monotheistic all-god, Forms are by far the best explanation for why this happens. If there is a complete, timeless version of all our characteristics, it makes sense that its connection to the body would cause such a field for the body to essentially grow into, for the Form is easily aware of all characteristics and can easily be aware of impending illness. This does not mean by any means suggest that Darwinian evolution is wrong, only that it cannot explain the process in its entirety. It also explains why when we observe the physical world we see a consistent image, despite the fact that it’s really not what the thing in itself looks like physically. When you look around wherever you are you don’t just see wavelengths or even particles that are nearly identical, what you see is those wavelengths collapsed into a very specific image each and every time you look at it, nearly identical each time.

So the rejection of Forms, if incorrect, should be rather simple: we just show that characteristics are physical in and of themselves, or that they do not exist independent of the mind (physicalism and idealism respectfully). They explain how we know things, why we see consistent external images rather than simply atomic or quantum interactions, how the cells of a living organism know to replicate, why EMF field changes can predict things like cancer or a menstrual cycle before the event, and even answer the mind-body problem, all by simply looking at

**“THE KEY ASPECT TO
HUMANITY IS THAT WE HAVE
A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS.”**

how the world is right now, through experience and scientific knowledge, without the need for further assumptions. It even explains simple annoyances like déjà vu! But it does not stop here, this is not all we can infer based on how things seem to, and are confirmed, to be.

Premise 5: The key aspect to humanity, and any other similar life which may be out there, is that we have a higher consciousness, a self-aware aspect, an isolate intelligence that seems to be distinct from the world we inhabit, separate from each other, and capable of interfering with and changing the objective world. As we show above, if X exists its Form exists, and so there must be a Form of this higher, self-aware, isolate consciousness, containing all the sub-Forms/characteristics of that consciousness. In other words, we can know this Form by looking at ourselves, for we share many characteristics with it.

Premise 6: We have self-awareness, desire, we love and hate, we partake in meta-cognition, we can be happy and sad, excited and bored, lonely and introverted, and so too must the Form of isolate consciousness partake in these characteristics as well. But as a Form there is more to it than this, for it is inherently immaterial, eternal, and outside of time. This means we have a nonphysical, timeless, self-aware, desirous, human-like being, which one should quickly recognize as the description of Godlike beings. Not in an omni-sense, but certainly in a polytheistic sense. This is reinforced by the fact that so many other Forms themselves must partake in consciousness (such as desire, knowledge, belief, etc), meaning that this Godlike being is not alone and further reinforcing a polytheistic view.

Premise 7: But why is this Form not the Christian devil or god, not a god of Hinduism or Islam, not a god of the Yezidi, or not the gods of Scandinavia? Even worse, is this question the wrong one to be asking? The oldest

known religious scriptures in history, known as the Pyramid Texts, written in the first human language, gives us the absolutely foundational views of the first organized human religions. In it they describe a being named Set, born unnaturally into the world, opposed to the Osirian gods so popularly worshiped, who nevertheless is the only being which can stave off chaos. It is related to, but considered something apart from, the natural world of the natural gods. Set was not an all-powerful threat, or a trickster like devil, he was simply capable of questioning and going against Ma'at (proper natural order). He was benevolent to man, and the central god of nomadic humans of the area relying on oases and rain rather than the stable rise and fall of the Nile. Through study of the texts related to this being, we see it is desirous, self-aware, it sometimes was featured in comedic ways, sometimes in entirely demonic ways, and everywhere in-between. It was crucial to the idea of conscious existence separate from the body, beyond the natural cycles after death, long before the material focused mummification.

In short, it was entirely relatable to the higher consciousness of human beings. Related to the natural world but with a feeling of being separate, capable of influencing that world but without full control over it. This is exactly what is feared

“IT’S NOT THAT SET IS THE ‘ONE TRUE GOD...’ CULTURES SIMPLY VARY IN INTERPRETATION.”

in most religion, the freedom of human mind and will, which has the capability of going against “Ma’at” if not kept in check. And what of other gods? At this stage in anthropology we are well aware that cultures experience things relatively and subjectively based on many variables, such as geographical location, wealth divide, education, war, and so forth. It’s not that Set is the “one true god.” Set is the Form of Higher Consciousness itself, the Egyptian interpretation of this objectively existent Form, and other cultures simply vary in interpretation for well-known reasons listed just above

A SETIAN RITE

WRITTEN BY SETAMONTET



I. Decompression

II. Ring the bell 9x

III. Light the Black Flame/Open the Gate

IV. Invocation of Set:

In the Name of Set, the supreme manifestation of the Prince of Darkness, I summon the Black Flame into my midst that I may Work my Will upon the warp and weave of the world. O Majesty of Set, hear me, look upon me, and enshrine within me the essence of the Highest of Life. Open wide the Gates of Infernus and come forth from beyond the Abyss to greet me as a Brother and kindred Spirit.

Enshroud me with the Powers of Darkness; let Them become One with me as I am become One with the Eternal Set, whose Throne is within the darkness behind the Constellation of the Seven Stars. As I send forth my most exalted and sublime Self, arm it with the Shining Pentagram of Set, and with the sceptre called Giver of Winds, that it may slay the cosmic stasis, dismay all challenges, and cast down all that is moved to appear against it.

Let, then, my eyes become the Eyes of Set, my strength become the Strength of Set, my will become the Will of Set! From the primordial depths I am risen up and am become transformed like the mighty Khepera, with the Wings of the Falcon I soar the Infinite. I dwell in the Fane of the Eternal Flame of Ba. Space and time bend to my Will, and I am Lord of Life, Death, and Life beyond Death. Hear then this Doom that I pronounce, and beware the Ka which now Comes Into Being through that ancient Art which is mine to command!

V. Summoning of the Four Elements:

South

From the South I call to Sekhmet, beautiful Lady of Flame, supreme goddess of creation and desolation, thou wanderer of the wastelands, Lady of the Waters of Life, and Destroyer by Fire. Come forth and enshrine within me your divine essence.

East

From the East I call to Lucifer, the Morning Star and Bearer of the Dark Light, thou Spirit of the Air who rideth the whirlwinds of the Abyss. Come forth and enshrine within me your divine essence.

North

From the North I call to Setamontet, dreaded Lord of the Realm of Darkness, thou Overpowering One, deathless in majesty and strength. Come forth from thy celestial solitude, behind the Constellation of the Seven Stars, and enshrine within me your divine essence.

West

From the West I call to Leviathan, the Eternal Serpent of the Abyss, the surging sea, and Dragon of perpetual Remanifestation. Thou who art the Absolute and the living principle of continuity and ageless existence. Come forth from the depths of infinite darkness and enshrine within me your divine essence.

VI. Graal Invocation:

By the Symbol of my Creation I have sworn to be an eternal disciple of the Dark Lord Set, who's holy Name I have taken as a part of my Self. I have pledged to forever walk the Path of the Left Hand in search of the knowledge, truth, and undefiled wisdom of the Prince of Darkness. Open the portals of the Abyss that the Black Light may illuminate the Way and guide me in my quest for the Infernal Graal.

Hail, Set!

Faithfulness beyond Death!

[Drink from the Graal]

**“FROM THE NORTH I CALL TO
SETAMONTET, DREADED LORD OF THE
REALM OF DARKNESS, THOU
OVERPOWERING ONE, DEATHLESS IN
MAJESTY AND STRENGTH.”**

VII. The Working

VIII. Reading of the "First Part of the Word of Set" -
Enochian and English:

*Ol sonf vorsg, goho Iad balt lansh calz vonpho Sobra zol
ror I ta Nazpsad Graa ta Malprg Ds holq Qaa nothoa
zimz od commah ta nobloh zein Soba thil gnonp prge*

*aldi Ds urbs oboleh grsam. Casarm ohorela caba pir Ds zonrensg cab erm Iadnah Pilah farzm od znrza adna gono
Iadpil Ds hom toh Soba Ipam lu Ipamis Ds lohoho vep zomd Poamal od bogpa aai ta piap piamol od vooan
ZACARE ca od ZAMRAN odo cicle qaa zorge, lap zirido noco MAD Hoath Iaida.*

I am within and beyond you, the Highest of Life, in majesty greater than the forces of the Universe; whose eyes are the Face of the Sun and the Dark Fire of Set; who fashioned your intelligence as his own and reached forth to exalt you; who entrusted to you dignity of consciousness; who opened your eyes that you might know beauty; who brought you the key to knowledge of all lesser things; and who enshrined in you the Will to Come Into Being. Lift your voices, then, and recognize the Highest of Life who thus proclaims your triumph; whose being is beyond natural life and death; who came as a flame to your world and enlightened your desire for perfection and truth. Arise thus in your glory, behold the genius of your creation, and be prideful of being, for I am the same - I who am the Highest of Life.

IX. Extinguish the Black Flame

So It Is Done!

/Setamontet\
Magister Ordo Serpentis

THOUGHTS ON “BLACK MAGIC” BY DR. MICHAEL A. AQUINO

WRITTEN BY ONYX

Introduction

Though originally provided only to Temple of Set initiates, *Black Magic* was later released in PDF form, and is now merged into Michael Aquino's *Temple of Set Vol I*.

“SET REPRESENTS THE SELF-AWARENESS INHERENT IN ALL SENTIENT BEINGS.”

Overview

The first chapter provides a historical review of the origins of the Temple of Set, and offers some interesting insights into the early Church of Satan from Aquino's perspective. Next comes an explanation of Egyptian religion and how their gods relate to "Forms" in the Platonic sense.

Aquino then explains self-initiation and recognition through the Temple's degree system. Also described are the concepts of the Left Hand Path vs. the Right Hand Path, Aeons, and the symbolism of the Pentagram of Set.

Chapter four provides the philosophical foundation for Black Magic in great detail, and introduces the concepts of Lesser and Greater Black Magic. The final two chapters define these forms of magic and the ethics involved in their pursuit.

Personal Thoughts

In my experience, this thing we call "Set" is not a savior figure capable of grace, and offers no hand-

holding. It is solely up to the individual to act upon whatever inspiration arises from the apprehension of this "Form of Consciousness".

To paraphrase Aquino, Set represents the self-awareness inherent in all sentient beings. He ties this to the concept of Platonic Forms, in that Set may be viewed as the source and activator of this principle. To me, Set is a hidden aspect of the universe that is able to reveal one's higher potential (or "Personal Form"). If the Realm of Set is where my "complete selfhood" resides, Black Magic serves as the gateway into that realm.

The book treats Black Magic as powerful and dangerous, and something to be engaged in with a fair amount of caution. The chapters on Lesser and Greater Black Magic (LBM and GBM) stress the importance of ethics, and how the lack thereof could backfire. (There is the matter of embarrassment in the case of LBM, and that of accepting the often unpredictable outcomes of GBM.) Therefore it is suggested to take things slow, which is advice I've heeded in my own work.

Conclusion

Black Magic builds upon carnally-based Satanism (as presented in *The Satanic Bible*) to include a rather comprehensive metaphysical view. Not everyone will agree with this view, but it is impossible to ignore the depth of research and personal reflection that went into its discovery. If for that reason alone, I believe this is a book many travelers of the Left-Hand Path would benefit from studying.

WHAT IS THE SELF?

WRITTEN BY AGAPE THERION

What do we mean when we refer to the self? In some Eastern traditions, there is only one self, called Atman, which is in all sentient beings. To the majority of Westerners, there are many selves, which may or may not include animals and beings other than humans. The East has its own form of the self the majority of Westerners know, called the “intellect” in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. This text also warns against confusing the intellect with the true self. The West, in turn, has its own form of the Atman. To Eliphas Levi, it was called the True Self.

None of these names or traditions really tell us what the True Self or Atman is, though. The first time it is explained fully is in the religion of Thelema, where it is understood to be the True Will, said to be either the will of a person once worldly desire is destroyed or the will of the person in accordance with nature. For the purposes of this essay, the former is more important. The True Will, in this case, is then what someone would do if they had all eternity to do everything, no obligations, etc. This is supported by Crowley's claims that there “is no god but man” and “every man and woman is a star”. The True Will is [the true] self, as it is all that is seen once all physical material is ignored. The True Will is not the thoughts, the actions, or anything else easily and readily recognized. It is the same in each being, but it is a mistake to say that all would act the same due to it. It is the Platonic form of will, called Set by the Setian religion.

**“THE FIRST TIME [TRUE WILL] IS
EXPLAINED FULLY IS IN THE
RELIGION OF THELEMA”**

Setians agree with the Eastern traditions of the Atman being the One Self, but opt to name it after the Egyptian god of benevolent chaos, Set. A better explanation can be offered of the Atman by studying Setian thought, namely their theory of Platonic Forms. A Platonic Form is a property common to all things belonging to a category. For example, the Platonic Form of a triangle sums up entirely the properties common to all triangles. So, having three sides would be part of the Platonic triangle, as would having angles summing to one hundred eighty degrees. In the same way, Set is the Platonic form of will – that is, he embodies the common properties of all wills. The Atman can be described as such, it being the most fundamental nature of self.

The oneness of Atman (self) with Brahman (everything), as posited in Advaita Vedanta, is easily explained by the philosophical position of solipsism. Solipsism is the belief that nothing can be known to exist but the self. Objective reality can never be reached, as the only way to attempt to interact with it is via the self, and the only way to perceive if it has been reached is also via the self. Thus, the self is the entire process of knowing, and cannot be said logically to be separate than the world be see through it. To say that one knows something other than the self is

exactly the same as a psychotic person claiming to know someone is chasing them – that is, it is simply an expression of the self, and not of “objective reality”. Thus, all that exists, or at least all that we can know to exist, is the self – the self is everything.

The self is a complicated discussion that requires much time to comprehend. The best description available is that it is the thing standing behind everything. It is not the thought, but the perceiver of the thought. It is not material, it is that which perceived the material.

THOUGHTS ON INITIATION AND THE LEFT HAND PATH

WRITTEN BY MERYTSETH

I have been asked to share my thought on what the Left Hand Path means to me, and in a word, it means completion. Don Webb wrote for the Temple of Set, “There is a vague notion that people will both understand initiation, and want it.” I certainly want it, and have for more years than I can care to count, but I certainly haven’t understood it, and am only just beginning to today.

My initiation may have started in the back pew of a southern Baptist church in the early 1990s. There was a petition to prevent the band White Zombie from performing in a neighboring town, because of “Satanic messages” in their music. Even as a self-professed Christian at the time, I was adamantly and vehemently opposed to the measure. I didn’t make this a secret.

**“I SAT ALONE IN THE REAR OF THE
CHURCH, DEFIANT. I LEFT THE
CHURCH NOT LONG AFTER THAT.**

I spoke to several people in the church about it, and made my opinion known. I explained that I would not support any effort on the Church’s part to attempt to be the “morality police” or dictate what sort of music people were or were not allowed to listen to. Some were receptive, others were not. On the day of the signing, we were asked to come up and sign at the end of the service. It was to be a group activity. One by one even those I considered close

friends abandoned me one by one to dutifully sign the petition. I sat alone in the rear of the church, defiant. I left the church not long after that, and requested in writing that my name be removed from the membership list. This was, of course, far from my only disagreement with the church, but it was the first time that it was made clear to me that I was essentially alone.

I became interested in the occult not long after leaving the church, had even read some Crowley (which I didn’t understand in the least, at the time), and had a copy of *The Satanic Bible*. This book, along with several other books on various types of magic(k), were discovered by my (also southern Baptist) grandparents one day. I was asked to throw the books away, in front of them. Again, I refused. I took them back to my bedroom, and placed them in a visible area of my bookshelf. I made it clear that while I was not a Satanist (I wasn’t... I was actually a little surprised, when I read LaVey’s book, that anyone outside the organization took them seriously at all). I told them that they did not have to agree with my interests, but they did not have the right to police the kind of books that I read.

I discovered Wicca not long after and found in it a haven that proved quite rewarding for me. It is, of course, very much in the Right Hand Path vein, but in my late teens and early 20s I was struggling with quite a few issues regarding my self-image, and so a practice that served to essentially dissolve the ego was a comfort to me. However, as is the way of these things, my personal issues did not vanish – I wasn’t successful in demolishing my ego, and my Wiccan days were also plagued with a nagging sense of cognitive dissonance not so much in my religious practice, but in my identity itself.

I am, you see, a transgender woman. At the time I was very much struggling with the fact that I was raised as, and living as, a male.

While I didn't understand it as such at the time, in hindsight, gender transition was a new kind of initiation. It is essentially an exercise in self-actualization. I was in a 5-year relationship when I came out, tearfully and terrified, to my partner. I started transition, with her support, in 2006, and today I live as a female and we are married. Transition is like a crucible; it burned away the pieces of me that I'd been using to deal with my gender identity issues. Transgender people are forced to be honest, at least once, in a way that very few people are ever asked to be honest. The truth of myself was laid bare, time and time again, for strangers, doctors, therapists, pharmacists, friends, family, and potential employers. There are few things more terrifying, and few things more empowering. In the years before transition I struggled with deep depression and an almost entirely absent sense of self – that is what my experience with Wicca had wrought. I entered a new phase of life as a female, and agnostic.

Around 2013 or so I found myself drawn once again to magic(k), and turned first, actually, to the Temple of Set – but my preconceived notions of the Left Hand Path I'd acquired as a Wiccan were hard to shake. Back then, I thought of the LHP as one of obstinate selfishness, where nothing mattered more than one's own needs, to the potential detriment everyone else. I couldn't see myself embracing such a brutal philosophy, completely dedicated to hedonism and greed, entirely devoid of compassion – now I know that most on the LHP wouldn't embrace such a philosophy, either.

**“MY PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OF THE
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Intrigued with the idea of Set, I found myself practicing a RHP variant of the ancient Egyptian religion, called Kemetic Paganism. I found a lot to like about working with the Neteru, but like Wicca, ultimately Kemeticism similarly failed to satisfy my deeper need for – as I now understand it – initiation; self-actualization; if you prefer, xeper.

Ultimately, I returned to the Temple of Set in an attempt to help my partner find a path to help fight her own battle with depression and anxiety. Having found no relief in the Eastern philosophies like Buddhism and Taoism, I wondered if perhaps something on the LHP would offer some clarity that the Vedas did not. When I read the resources on the Temple's website with fresh eyes, I realized that this was a path for me. The more I read, the more I found a sense of familiarity, the key to what I'd been becoming all this time.

I read *Black Magic* by Dr. Aquino, which begins with the following description of the reader:

- You feel that there are metaphysical realities beyond the physical universe, and that this possibility is sufficiently important to you for you to investigate whether or not it is true.
- Religions and atheistic/materialist schools of thought to which you have previously been exposed have ultimately impressed you as inadequate to this task.
- What you have heard and read about the Temple of Set suggests to you that it just might have the keys to this puzzle.
- Involved with such keys are unusual skills that you may use, both in pursuit of such metaphysical wisdom and in support of objectives in the physical universe.

I was almost aghast at how accurately this, and the pages that followed, described me.

Which brings me to today. What is the Left Hand Path to me?

It is the path that I took to realize my own gender transition.

It is the path that aligned my identity and my personal presentation with the nature of my psyche; my consciousness; my true self.

It is the path by which I learned that I do not have to bury or be ashamed of my own darkness. I have always been aware of the darkness I carry in myself, and as transformative as gender transition was, I continued to try to bury it.

It is the path I've always been on, as a musician and performer – for what is a performance, if not an act of Black Magic(k)?

I have been seeking, and experiencing, Xeper – without fully realizing the nature of what I was doing, and even when my instincts were guiding me to embrace the darkness that I was thriving in, I continued to make excuses for it, and resist. Now, I have the opportunity begin my initiation again anew, with my eyes wide open, and the voice of Set in my ear. I shape the world with the passion of Sakhmet, and I shape myself with the Black Flame of Set. I am prepared to dedicate myself fully to my own becoming and Remanifestation.

**“IT IS THE PATH THAT ALIGNED MY
IDENTITY AND MY PERSONAL
PRESENTATION WITH THE NATURE OF
MY TRUE SELF.”**

MYSTERIES OF HORUS AND SET

WRITTEN BY XEPERA MASET

The story of Horus and Set is very well known, perhaps the best known story of the Egyptians. These entities and their story are extremely important to understanding religion, and especially for understanding occultism. Yet all most of us see are a single, perverted version of the story that originated long after the beings in question, and have been lost and twisted repeatedly over millennium. Having looked into these topics in extreme depth, I would like to discuss these famous Neteru.

“HAVING LOOKED INTO THESE TOPICS IN EXTREME DEPTH, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THESE FAMOUS NETERU.”

Stellar v. Solar

It is commonly understood that Set was the brother and murder of Osiris, who sexually assaulted then battled Osiris' child Horus, Horus eventually winning kingship over Egypt (Budge, 1969). One of the most basic reasons this is appealing is because it fits snugly with Christian culture and morality, clear lines being drawn between “good” and “evil”, with Osiris/Horus being an obvious precursor of Christ. These similarities should be more than enough reason

for the occultist to doubt this version of the story. The Cult of Osiris played a role so massive it is hard to conceive, from Egypt all the way to modern religion. It gave us our first heaven-like afterlife, our first true villain god, the original Solar religion, our first savior god. But this story needs to be disregarded specifically because it is so blatantly distorted. At the end of the New Kingdom period, Set became fully demonized due to the foreign rulers who the xenophobic Egyptians despised (Te Velde, 1967). The Coptics only took this farther, though many of their rituals do make reference to Set under other names (Webb, 2011). Prior to this massive downfall, the religion of Osiris had dominated Egyptian thought since the early dynasties, and we can even see where the Pyramid Texts have been altered in order to make them more Osirian (The Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.). As Egypt grew, this very early and useful religious philosophy spread throughout and became dominate, forever changing Egyptian from their Stellar to Solar religions.

The stellar religion was based on a separation of the Self from the Divine, in which the dead individual would rise even above the level of the Gods (The Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.; Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014). This is what we see in the Setian Pyramid Texts, which the dead rising above even the gods of creation.. Further, the physical body was vastly

less important, with mummification not even being part of the earlier burials at Nubt, both the original location for the Cult of Set, and the birthplace of things such as written human language (Morgan, 2005). Material goods were not shunned though, and we find grave goods even in these proto-Egyptian graves. Interestingly, broken pots in early burials contain some of the first examples we have of isolated, point down pentagrams. Acts in life were what led to one being accepted amongst the ranks of the Gods after death, their virtues and what they achieved. A choice was also given between Horus and Set, leading to essentially separate afterlives (Pyramid Texts, n.d.). The circumpolar stars were associated with Set, especially Ursa Major (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011; Flowers, 2012, Gordon, 2001). The circumpolar, “imperishable” stars were the focus of afterlife thought, as they were separate from the cycles of earth, the sun, and even the stars, as they never sank below the horizon (Webb, 2011; Levenda, 2008). This is much closer to the Eastern idea of being free from the cycles of reincarnation than the obeying of rules and “heaven” found in the West.

The original Egyptian death cults were based around the circumpolar, or imperishable, stars and so were the domain of Set (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011; Flowers, 2012). Horus and Set, together, created a path, ladder, or stairway for the initiated dead from earth to the imperishable stars (Te Velde, 1967, Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.). Some of this can still be seen in the earlier pyramid texts, where Set is still so crucial to the ascension of the dead. Throughout even the Osirian texts we see traces of the original Set, who demands of the gods to deify the dead. “Set and Nephthys speak to the gods: N has become like an imperishable star: if he wishes you shall live you

shall live, if he wishes you shall die you shall die”. The pharaoh “howls like Set howls” and the gates of heaven open before him. The dead is “like Set when he lifts himself and ascends to the heavens” (Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.). The importance of Set to deification of the Self is immense and obvious. This only changes with the coming of the Osiris cult. Horus is also referred to often, working with Set. Rather than a savior god of some sort, Horus is shown as the equal to Set, powerful in all the ways he is not, helping the dead ascend (Te Velde, 1967). There is no evidence of Horus relying on Osiris or Isis in many of the texts, except the obviously Osirian ones.

Solar religion, on the other hand, was based on uniting the Self with the Divine, in which after death an individual would either become identified with a Neter, such as Osiris, or would live a very similar life in a land still ruled by the gods (Budge, 1898). The physical body slowly becomes more and more important, as it was created by the gods and had to remain pure. It was required for life after death. Obeying the rules (such as with the negative confessions) is how one received

“THE ORIGINAL EGYPTIAN DEATH CULTS WERE BASED AROUND THE CIRCUMPOLAR, OR IMPERISHABLE, STARS AND SO WERE THE DOMAIN OF SET.”

acceptance into the afterlife, being judged by the Gods in the end to see if the dead is worthy (Budge, 1898). There was no choice of what came next, it was either nonexistence or unity/submission to Horus (originally) or Osiris (after interfering with the original relationship of Horus and Set). The focus of thought was on the sun’s cycle through the sky and the cycles of nature that affected daily Egyptian life (Levenda, 2008). Rather

than striving for heroic like immortality, Egyptians simply wanted a predictable and constant life where they did not have to worry about things, such as if the Nile would not flood because they had gone against the rules of the Gods. Darkness became a threat, later to be demonized and shunned, and representative of all that went against the Solar theology. This is where Western religion stems from, obeying the rules for postmortem rewards and hoping to not upset the Gods.

To many these differences may seem insignificant, but the occultist and magician can see the vast significance between these two points of view. Horus and Set were originally seen as equals, where Horus represented things most relative to this life, and Set was the God of the afterlife. As many know, the image of Set is actually based off of a fantastic animal, it is something not real unlike most other deities (Te Velde, 1967; Budge, 1969; Aquino, 2014). What most don't know is that in early Egyptian history the Set animal was often seen next to a winged, hawk headed Griffin (Te Velde, 1967). These two fabricated creatures were seen as two sides of the same coin, their design representing their traits, such as the forked, serpent like tail of Set and its close association with "Darkness", as well as the obvious serpentine symbolism of the circumpolar stars especially at the time of early Egypt (where alpha draconis was the pole star) (Levenda, 2013). It is only with the rise of solar religion in Egypt that the dark side of the coin became "evil".

Where did this Solar religion come from? It makes sense that in pre-dynastic Egypt a storm God would be given the same respect as a solar god, as the

nomadic Egyptians would have relied on rain water before the Nile (Te Velde, 1967). We also know that other local religions, such as the Sumerians, already had pantheons where human beings were crushed below the weight the Gods. It is more than possible that Osiris was an imported God from foreign lands. This is not to be confused with the fact that Set was a god of foreigners (Budge, 1969). There was a massive mixing of tribes in the land of Egypt, and there is no reason to think that all of these were "native" Egyptians (Grimal, 1994). The fact that we recognize many of these gods or their forms as imported certainly helps. It also explains why Osiris is supposed to have claimed ancient rulership over Egypt, and why the Osiris had to repurpose Horus to validate their religion – they were outsiders. It also explains why it took so long, and why Set also had to be demonized. In other words, stellar religion was actual Egyptian religion, and solar religion was imported and aided by the changes to Egyptian societies.

Another interesting aspect of all this is that the original Egyptian burials in Nubt (whose main deity was Set) had very different burials that did not rely on the preservation of the physical body. Bodies were buried in the fetal position, rather exposed to the elements,

with their head cut off facing the opposite direction of the body (Te Velde, 1967). Ascension was earned in life, and then one became deified, a rather straight forward process that fits well in

dualistic systems. It also seems that the original deification given by Horus and Set was much different then later afterlives. The dead was truly deified, they became like a Neteru, a god or Form, a manifestation

“HORUS AND SET WERE ORIGINALLY SEEN AS EQUALS, WHERE HORUS REPRESENTED THINGS MOST RELATIVE TO THIS LIFE, AND SET WAS THE GOD OF THE AFTERLIFE.”

of either their lord Horus or Set. It is interesting to stop here and look at the Egyptian conceptions of the soul.

Tangent: Aspects of the Egyptian Soul

The Khat or Body: this could be considered the physical body, but it is more comparable to that which holds the body together, that which causes cells to recreate near-perfectly, the natural energy generated by the body. This can be seen in the Life-Fields of Dr. Harold Burr.

The Ren or Name: This is what a thing is called, from inanimate objects and forces to people's or location's names. Think of Ren as if everyone you know in professional life suddenly knew all your user names for online forums. If you're reading this, you've probably shared plenty of ideas on your ideology that does not need to be known by everyone and their mothers. Maybe not if you have well accepted beliefs, but with something like occultism I would never want all my coworkers and clients to have direct access to all my beliefs. So I have a "secret" or "magical" name that give me the power to keep this one side secret while still openly discussing it. Even a regular name has power though. Just call someone to summon them, to connect deeper with them, even to show them how angry you are depending on context. When we consider names as "what things are called" we are almost taking all language into account.

The Sheut or Shadow: To the Egyptians the shadow was literally the shadow cast by the body. It was considered to contain aspects of the individual, which is actually entirely true. I find this one the most difficult to integrate (the rest actually are rather easy to understand), because a shadow is pretty understandable. But even when I hear the word "shadow" I have to think of Carl Jung and his archetype of the shadow. The

shadow is the completely dark, obscured part of an individual, which they themselves often do not understand. An example of this is when someone else's actions annoy us, but in reality it's because we hate the very same trait in ourselves.

The Ib or "Heart-Soul" or Ego: I think "heart soul" is an awesome primitive term for what we now refer to as the ego. It has the best and worst of us locked away in there, it's driven by primal urges and emotion rather than rational thought. It is the ego that opposes the shadow, hides it away so our pride is not hurt. It was the heart, or in this case the ego, that was weighed in afterlife ceremonies to decide whether the individual was worthy or not. Why? The ego/heart has no filter and helps us understand who we truly are deep down.

The Ba or Consciousness or Soul: The Ba is the actual individual, the consciousness itself, or isolate intelligence, or psyche, there are plenty words for it. The Ba relies on the Khat to have a place to grow, connected through the Ib, which itself arises from the Khat. If the Ba is worked in the proper ways throughout life, it can become more powerful than the Khat and Ib and thus survive physical death. It is the field which connects brain to Form.

The Ka or Higher Self: The Egyptian Gods, known as Neteru (Neter for one), were quite similar to and likely the inspiration for Platonic Forms, perfect but abstract aspects of nature that then manifest in different ways. The second someone conceived a chair,

“IF THE BA IS WORKED IN THE PROPER WAYS THROUGHOUT LIFE, IT CAN BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN THE KHAT AND IB AND THUS SURVIVE PHYSICAL DEATH.”

“chairness” would have come into being. It is chairness that allows us to recognize chairs despite drastically varying designs. Likewise, with nature we can recognize cycles, storms, types of growth, language itself all as one thing despite the millions of different languages and dialects throughout history. So when a human being is born, a perfect Form of them comes into existence as well – the Ka. If an individual can get in touch with and align themselves (the Ba) with the Ka they will essentially be living the perfect life for them.

Akh or Deified Individual: If the Ba lines up with the Ka and survives physical death, it is possible for it to itself become a Neter. To the Egyptians these beings would be indistinguishable from other Neteru. Basically this is “self-deification”, the individual becoming a god through their own efforts.



Horus the Younger v. Horus the Elder

There is also the issue of Horus the Younger vs. Horus the Elder. Horus the Younger is the son of Osiris and Isis, and considered to be the 10th deity to come out of the Ennead (Budge, 1969). Horus the Younger is essentially the same as Osiris, but reborn and ruling the world of Life as opposed to Osiris ruling the world of Death. This may seem confusing, and it is important to pause to discuss the Egyptian understanding of the gods, the Neteru. The Egyptians

did not believe in physical beings who had dramas in the ways of other religions. Rather, the Neteru are similar to, and likely the inspiration of, Platonic Forms (Aquino, 2015). So to say Horus the Younger is a lower manifestation of Osiris is not as nonsensical as it seems. Think of gnostic Aeons, for comparison. Horus the Younger represents a less pure version of what Osiris does, from ruler-ship to stasis. Understanding the Neteru also helps us understand that Horus the Younger is a perversion of Horus the Elder, the original Horus. Much like Christianity adopting religious dates or saviors from other religions to make it more accessible, the Osirians repurposed Horus the Elder to promote their own religion, where this timeless and ancient god was actually the son of Osiris. The idea of Horus the Younger must also be discarded with the rest of the Osirian interpretation of the myth.

So what was Horus the Elder, and what was Its relationship to Set? The Cults of Horus and Set are the two oldest known cults in human history - far predating Egypt, we find the two cults already established in pre-historical Egypt (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2015). The ancients did not see Horus and Set as eternal enemies, but rather Horus and Set represented the fundamental duality that the Egyptians saw in all things. Horus and Set were, themselves, the foundation of all Egyptian religion. It is true that Horus and Set were seen as light and dark, day and night, stability and chaos, tradition and confusion, but there was no concept of them being “good” or “evil”. They were both necessary. There was also a unity between them, rather than the division commonly represented (Te Velde, 1967). Again, the Osirian myth must be discarded. This clears up many of the issues, such as how Egypt didn’t view any Neteru as evil, or how there was no prolonged combat or anything close between any of the other gods (Aquino, 2015). In

fact, it's likely that Horus and Set never were originally fighting until the Osirian religion wrote it as such. Rather, studies of the myth suggest that the relationship between Horus and Set was originally a romantic, consensual one (Te Velde, 1967). Mertz (2008) even points out that the story may have been seen as epic and humorous, similar to the tales of other culture. As we will see, this is likely the case on the outside, but initiated understanding of the stories will show things were different for those on the inside. The original myth actually promotes the idea of a union of Horus and Set, which produces Thoth. Horus fills Set with his sperm through trickery, which in the end brings about Thoth, who rises from Set's forehead. Further, the eye represented the power of Horus, where the testicles were the power of Set. Set attained power from Horus, the power of Order, and Horus attained power from Set, the power of Creation and Change (Te Velde, 1967). This is similar to the Ying-Yang, where the white side contains a black dot and visa versa. Together these two forces create Thoth, he who writes the universe into existence.

Remember how the Neteru are similar to Platonic Forms? It should not be thought that two beings were conceived as literally having sex to create another. Rather than a myth similar to that of Christianity and Solar religions, we see that the story of

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WROTE IT AS SUCH.”

Horus and Set is much more Egyptian in nature, perhaps somewhat anticlimactically. So to sum up thus far, Horus and Set, un-pervverted, were the foundational polarity of the universe, which unites to create all the

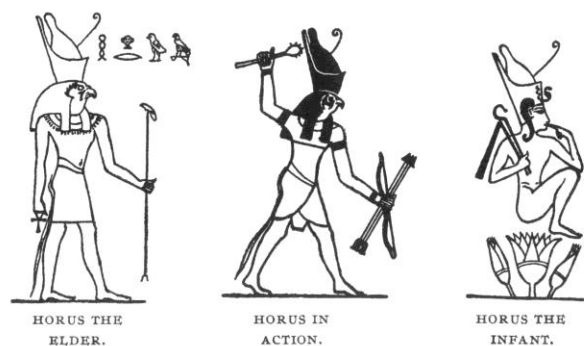
cosmos. As Neteru/Forms, all other Neteru should be understood as manifestations of the two. Anubis, for example, is a lesser manifestation of Set, which explains why Set is understood as his “father” and the two are sometimes used interchangeably in texts. It is also why Ra has the same head as Horus, for Solar religion is a worship of Order/Horus, which the Egyptian state publically promoted.

When Osiris absorbed Horus he absorbed the Solar aspects of Egyptian religion. With the demonization of Set, a morality arose and a higher value placed on the Solar over the Stellar. Now deification was rewarded by the gods directly for proper behavior, though there were obviously loopholes for the high class. The material world became increasingly important, and with it the body, starting the first move from Egyptian esotericism to exotericism. These effects are still felt today in the on-going fight between the Solar Abrahamic religions and the Solar materialistic philosophies, and even in occultism which remains mostly Solar in nature.

A large part of the history of Horus and Set is the idea that Horus is better, more virtuous, more important, superior, etc. to Set in some way. But it seems quite possible that originally, Set was actually seen as the superior Neter. One of the main reasons for this is that Set was known as the “Son of Nut”, the Egyptian Neter representing the skies in their entirety (Te Velde, 1967). The “Son of Nut” referenced Set in all cases, nobody else was considered the son or daughter of Nut directly (Te Velde, 1967). This is likely a carry-over from the time when Set was seen as the head of the Neteru. There are, in fact, references that have Set as the one and only Neter holding the latter to heaven, whereas we do not see this with Horus. That Horus as the sun (later Ra) could be defeated by Apep,

whereas Set could not and was actually the main defender, further shows the importance and power of Set. Even in the Pyramid Texts we see that Horus makes the Earth quake, but Set makes the Sky shake (Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.). Another interesting thing to notice is that there are cases, such as in the texts of Unas, where the king is referred to as ****a**** Horus, rather than a specific entity named Horus. It may be that Horus has always been associated with the actual ruler of the nome or country, who we know was viewed as a literal demigod. To become a “Horus” can be seen as becoming a king over the Earth and/or over the Neteru, which matches exactly with the stellar afterlife ideals of the early Egyptians. This could also explain why only the Horus name was generally preferred for the Pharaoh name, despite the two Neteru clearly being viewed as equally important.

In the end, however, it does not really matter if one viewed Horus and Set as somehow better. Most likely it can down to preference, which is why Unas was allowed to choose between Horus and Set upon reaching the Imperishable Stars (Pyramid Texts Online, n.d.). Following a balanced path between the two, or picking one over the other, is up to the individual. But what can we know about the nature of this choice between Horus and Set? For one thing, we know that Horus was a pharaoh-like role, where the dead became identified even with Atum (who preceded Horus and Set in mythology), king over the Neteru. Set, on the other hand, was known as “the separator”, being drawn as a fantastic animal and represented even in the earliest myths as an outsider (Te Velde, 1967).



The Osiris Myth

One thing to clear up is that I do not think we should reject the Osiris myth all together, as in ignore it. Rather, it does not describe the original understanding of the Neteru Set and Horus. It can, however, be used to understand modern religion and how it varies with ancient religion. The Egyptians saw the skies as the literal heavens, with the stars representing a physical form of the Neteru, or being where the Neter was supposed to live or exist. (Clark, 2000). This matches closely with the Hermetic understanding of “as above, so below”, where the physical heavens helped to understand the divine world. Horus, the god of Light, represented the daytime and the sun. Horus was the ruler of the earth, surrounded by other gods of the zodiac or starts. Set, as the god of Dark, was represented by nighttime, and explicitly the circumpolar northern starts (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008). This means either Set or Horus was in the sky **at all times**. It is interesting to note that Set, as being “higher” than Horus, can possibly be seen as “more divine”, but I do not personally know if the Egyptians understood that the stars were still “up” when the sun was, or that they were farther away. More likely is that Horus and Set were seen as equals.

In the Osiris myth, Set and Osiris are brothers and Osiris is the ruler of Egypt (Budge, 1969). Set, jealous of Osiris' power, murders him. Throughout the story Isis impregnates herself using the body of Osiris, giving birth to Horus. Horus and Set battle, with Horus eventually winning rulership over Egypt. This is obviously extremely simplified! In the Osiris myth cycle, Set is an archetypal villain, a clear precursor to the modern Satan/Devil. He is jealous, violent, a heavy handed ruler, a rapist and pedophile, and hated by everyone including his wife. We know, of course, that this was a twisting of the original Set by the followers of Osiris in early dynastic Egypt, especially starting around Dynasty IV-VI. Yet this was the version that became one of the most well-known and well preserved myths of Egyptian – and human – history. There are many interesting mysteries to Horus and Set here though, and we will start by looking at the more mysterious Set.

One of the big things that jumps right out is that Set is the initiator of Osiris. Osiris needed to die in order to become ruler of the Duat (afterlife) (Te Velde, 1967). While this seems obvious at face value, we see that it was not publically acknowledged by the Egyptians, and only known to the priesthoods. This increases Set's importance for the initiated, and his malevolence for the uninitiated. It was also Set, in the form of a bull, who carries the body of Osiris into the Duat (Te Velde, 1967). This is a holdover from Set's original role as a guide into the next world, formerly the circumpolar stars, and now a mostly ethereal, "divine" location. Without Set Osiris would never die, and never make it to the underworld. Further, the Opening of the Mouth ceremony was crucial to both the Neteru and the dead (Te Velde, 1967; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011). This is what brought the spirit of a Neter into a statue,

or allowed you to talk in the afterlife. Like everyone, this ritual was necessary for Osiris. The key to the opening of the mouth ceremony was a tool known as the Adze, which literally opened the mouth. This tool was shaped as the constellation Ursa Major, one of the constellations most associated with Set, and made from materials believed to be sacred to Set (Te Velde, 1967; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011; Flowers, 2012). Obviously it was still realized, even if only behind closed doors, that Set was extremely necessary to the Osiris cycle.

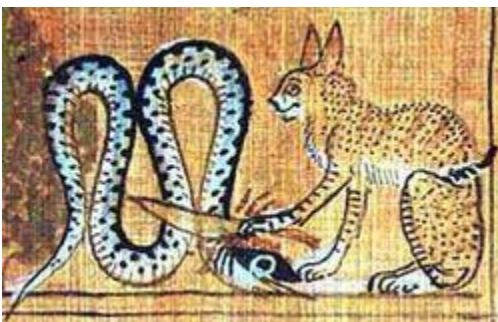
"SET IS THE INITIATOR OF OSIRIS."

As for Horus, he is seen as the son of Osiris, nephew of Set. It is in this tale where we see Set gouging out Horus' eye, and Horus ripping off Set's testicles, as well as Set attempting to rape Horus, and the endlessly hysterical "tainted lettuce" incident (Budge, 1969). Horus had to be hidden from Set as a child because he was not nearly powerful enough to challenge Set. He loses many times before finally becoming victorious over Set. As touched upon, Horus the Child is a manifestation of Osiris himself, Osiris reborn almost, a lesser Form. Horus was the power of the Pharaoh (same as the Elder), Osiris on Earth. Again we see an obvious precursor to Christianity, without all the utter bullshit of trying to directly compare Christ to Horus. Horus had to actively fight back against the chaos of Set, actively attempt to uphold Ma'at, same as the pharaoh. This puts Horus the Child as the center of the universal struggle between order and chaos. It's interesting to note that later gnostic sects held the concept of Horos, "the limit", which was the division between the Upper and Fallen Aeons. As the sun, Horus also represents the entity between the world of humans and the world of the Neteru.



A Brief Word on Apep

The story of Apep and Set holding him back is also important. It goes that after his family disowned him, Set was adopted by Ra. Set would ride on the sun boat of Ra, and at night he would have to fight back the serpent Apep. It was thought that every night Apep would try to stop the sun in its course by hypnotizing it was a stare. When facing Apep, all the Neteru in the boat would faint, except Set, who pushed the snake back. Apep can be seen to represent absolute chaos, non-existence, delusion, and so forth. It seems that Set was the only Neter not swayed by Apep, likely because Set was understood to be Dark and Chaotic as well. It has been theorized that Apep was understood as a more eldritch form of Set, almost a kind of dark Gnosticism except Set is the actual good guy. Either way, Set was absolutely necessary again, which correlates to his resurgence in the second intermediate period and new kingdom (Te Velde, 1967; Webb, 2011).



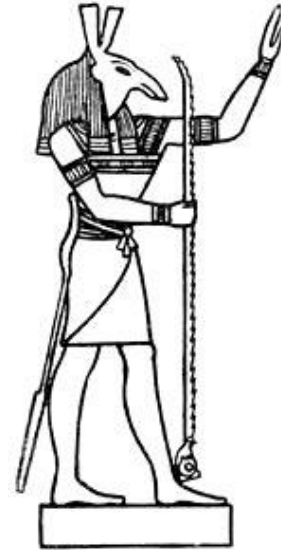
Consorts

Finally there is the question of consorts, as Egyptian Neteru are always paired with a female aspect (Budge, 1969; Te Velde, 1967). Horus is difficult, as he is commonly considered either a child of Osiris and Isis, or the fifth sibling of the Ennead that did not have a consort. This is in keeping with the Osirian mythos though. We can see either Isis or Hathor as the consort of Horus, though it can also be argued that these two Neteru are inherently the same. They represent the earth, material pleasure, drunkenness and celebration, the harvest and agriculture, domestication, nurturing motherhood and the wrath of an angry parent. This is the classic fertility goddess, associated with Life in line with Horus.

Many sources recognize Taweret as the wife or concubine of Set (Morgan, 2005; Gordon, 2001; Wilkinson, 2003; Ancient Egypt Online, n.d.; Seawright, n.d.). Te Velde (1967) suggests that the Sa symbol, associated with Taweret, is grammatically related to the Sha animal, the dog form of Set. This would be in keeping with the wordplay used in early Egyptian language. During the early times of the language, wordplay and puns were one of the main ways in which Egypt-created their language. In many instances it was seen that Taweret was responsible for keeping Set separated from the Gods in the Northern skies, whether to “retain his evil” or, earlier on, literally to be the Separation between Set in the Gods (Morgan, 2005; Seawright, n.d.; Ancient Egypt Online, n.d.). Set’s name itself, in early Egypt, was often a single symbol representing “Separator” or “Isolator” (Te Velde, 1967). Another way she was connected with Set was that they were both related to the northern circumpolar stars (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011; Flowers, 2012). Taweret was seen as the constellation

Draco, which may have been envisioned as much larger to the Egyptians (Morgan, 2005; Gordon, 2001; Ancient Egypt Online, n.d.; Seawright, n.d.). It is possible that she was seen as a mother to the gods. Ursa Minor was seen as Sobek riding on Taweret's back in some situations, or part of Taweret herself (Gordon, 2001; Ancient Egypt Online, n.d.; Seawright, n.d.). However, in the Dendera zodiac, Ursa Minor is seen as the Jackle of Set (Gordon, 2001).

Set was also related to the circumpolar stars, and is another important way the two were connected, and Set was sometimes seen as the circumpolar north in its entirety (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008). The earliest death-cults of Egypt were focused around the circumpolar north, which may make Taweret that much more important in pre-history (Te Velde, 1967; Aquino, 2014; Levenda, 2008; Webb, 2011; Flowers, 2012).



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