

though the Non-Existent implies the undifferentiated oneness, it also means by comparison with the Existent, inertia, stagnation, unconsciousness. But as a living counterpart of the Existent, it can overflow, invade the Existent, for instance at the unconscious level, among human beings in sleep, in nature, in floods. Although it threatens ordered existence, it offers, during human sleep, an opportunity for revitalization, rejuvenation. The task of the gods and pharaohs is to keep the existent ordered, defined, active and organized and hold the Non-Existent at bay. All this was worked out by E. Hornung in his *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: the One and the Many*, 1971 (translated from the German into English in 1983). The Non-Existent is obviously the inexhaustible pleroma, or Waters of Space of the Vedas, the Nun of Egyptian cosmogony.

For the initiated priests as for the *esoteric doctrine*, creation was an emanation, a transformation of the infinite matrix into a limitation, a measure of it; the emergent active deity, Atum is “within his limit” and, as described in a *Pyramid Text*, he is “the serpent whose coils delimit the creation,” so Rundle Clark expresses it in his *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt* (p. 51). Out of the primeval ocean of space (Nun), Atum arises, his “outer coils” being the limits of the world: “I am the outflow of the Primeval Flood, he who emerged from the waters. / I am the ‘provider of attributes’ serpent with its many coils. / I am the Scribe of the Divine Book which says what has been and effects what is yet to be. (*Pyramid Text*, 1146)”

Powerful archetypal images here encapsulate the significance of manifested existence. *The Secret Doctrine’s* Root-matter appears here in the “primeval flood,” Nun, in the “Provider of attributes,” i.e., of potentialities waiting to be realized; it pulsates in the “Scribe of the Divine Book,” the *Logos* or *Word* incarnate in matter that shapes this primordial substance and inscribes all things in the Book of Destiny.

One of the esoteric tenets of *The Secret Doctrine* whereby “... Deity ... is ... ‘the EVER BECOMING, as well as the ever universally present, and the ever Existing.’ ... a perpetual, never-ceasing evolution, circling back in its incessant progress through æons of duration into its original status — ABSOLUTE UNITY (SD II:545) finds an echo in Atum of the Heliopolitan cosmogony: ‘he who completes himself,’ who emerges from the timeless Nun to become the traverser of millions of years whose motion whirls chaos into