In this essay we attempt to establish, in the ancient Egyptian ontology, the consubstantiality of being between the Divine Supreme and that of Its creations. We seek to verify the statement made in a lecture by the renowned linguist and Egyptologist Dr. Rkhty Amen who made the claim that, “All things are nTrw.” Examples from primary Egyptian texts will be given, as well as parallels from modern African initiatory texts for comparison.

In this video clip, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD9H0PoiyYk&feature=relmfu, Dr. Rkhty Amen makes the statement that “all things are ntrw.” This statement has been met with disagreement within a small circle of scholars. The disagreement is more philosophical than it is textual. The claim is that “objects” cannot be the Divine because the Divine is immaterial. It is argued that the ntrw are separate from materiality and therefore all “things” cannot be ntrw. This argument extends to the Supreme Being. It is believed by some that the Supreme Being is separate from creation. We seek to establish in this essay that this is farthest from the case according to the ancient Egyptians. I argue here that this paradigm persists because of a misreading of Egyptian texts, a lack of knowledge of what the names for the deities actually mean and their importance to a proper decipherment of the myths.

Before we continue, a few definitions are in order. We are arguing that the Divine and creation (the divinities) are consubstantial. The etymological online dictionary defines this term as follows:
Consubstantial: late 15c., a term in the theology of the trinity, from Church L. *consubstantialis*, from *com-* "with" (see *com-*) + *substantia* (see substance). In general use from 1570s. Related: *Consubstantiality*.

Substance: c.1300, "essential nature," from O.Fr. *substance* (12c.), from L. *substantia* "being, essence, material," from *substantis*, pp. of *substare* "stand firm, be under or present," from sub "up to, under" + stare "to stand," from PIE root *sta-* "to stand" (see *stet*). A loan-translation of Gk. hypostasis. Meaning "any kind of corporeal matter" is first attested mid-14c. Sense of "the matter of a study, discourse, etc." first recorded late 14c.

In other words, to have substance is to have being and to be consubstantial is to share the same "being or character." This can be material or immaterial and we argue for both cases as regards ancient Egyptian ontology. We will discover that the name for the Divine is associated with "being" in Egyptian texts. This essential "essence" (being) of the Divine is shared with creation. This is also reflected in the lexicon of Egypt, as the name for the Divine (or one if its major aspects/epithets) is also associated with creation itself and/or mankind. With this said, if everything (all things and concepts) is/is of the Divine, then by logic all things are Divine.

**Consubstantiation in Egyptian Texts**

Numerous scholars support the Egyptian consubstantiation theory of the Divine in all things. Karenga (2006: 182) states, “… [T]he Creator, as in other creation narratives, creates the world out of his own “body,” distinguishing parts of him for diversity and joining together in continuity.” When it comes to area cosmologies, Obenga (2004: 33) notes the drastic difference between Egyptian and non-African cosmologies in the area. He informs us that:

Egyptian mythology is radically different. There the creative demiurge emerges from within Nwn, and only after that begins the work of creation. There is NO independent Creator, no Demiurge standing over and apart from Creation, born already before the birth of the universe...Every style and form of Life arises from that primal, uncreated water.

Raghild B. Finnestad—in his Image of the World and Symbol of the Creator. On the Cosmological and Iconological Values of the Temple of Edfu—also supports the idea that there is a continuity of being in Maatian anthropology. Finnestad (1989: 31) notes, “there appears to be no essential ontological separation (though there is a conceptual distinction) between the species,...matter and spirit, body and soul...(or) God’s world...(and) man’s world.” He later continues, “the categories applied in Egyptian religious ontology do not accentuate the differences... (r)ather one sees the opposite interest: the stress on affinities and connections.”

There is no radical separation between creation and the Creator: all are united in an infinite whole. As noted by James Allen (1988: 8)¹

... the Egyptians lived in a universe composed not of things, but of beings. Each element is not merely a physical component, but a distinct individual with a unique personality and will. The sky is not an inanimated vault, but a goddess who conceives the sun each night and gives birth to him

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in the morning. The atmosphere that separates sky from earth is not an empty void, but a god. The Duat is not merely a mysterious region through which the sun passes at night, but the god Osiris. Even the vast and lifeless outer waters have an identity, as the god Nu.

What Allen reaffirms of Egyptian cosmology is that all things, or major categories of being, are represented by a “god” (nTr). If the sky, the earth, the elements, etc. (i.e., all manners of being), are represented by a nTr, then all things are ntrw (divinities). In the Egyptian writing script, known as mdw nTr “Divine Words,” the concept of divinity is represented by numerous determinatives of varying forms. A few major examples follows:

| ![Image](image1.png) |

There are others that are not used as frequently as these, but in many respects they are simply variations on the themes above. If you see one of these signs (or its variants) as a determinative placed at the end of an Egyptian word, then that object or concept (for which the word represents) is divine.

For example, the Egyptian word si3 “exceptional insight, perception, awareness, knowledge, reason, to notice,” is personified and recognized as a ntr (a divine principle) and it is proven by the ntr determinant at the end of the word. The concept of si3 is non-tangible and pertains to a concept. However, these determinatives did not only apply to non-tangible concepts, but concrete realities. A word for “bird, kite” in Egyptian is bik. This demonstrates that the animal kingdom is also ntrw.

The whole earth was deified. A word for “earth, field” is gbb. As a personification it is written as ciLuba kaaba “location, place”; Massai kop (kòbá) “earth”). The earth itself is seen as Divine (a nTr) and this includes that which is on and in the earth as can be seen by this phrase: imy tsi “that which is in the earth”. Even cities were deified: nwt “City” (personified as a deity) [Wb II S 212].

The Divine being the very features of the earth is supported in the Shabaka text (710 BCE) written by the philosopher priests of Mn-Nfr (Memphis). This text reaffirms that the ntrw are in and are all things, for it states:

```
sw *k ntrw dt.sn
Thus did the gods enter their bodies
m ht nb[t] e’t nb[t] m im nb
of all types of wood, stone and of clay
ht nb[t] rd hr-htw.f
of all types of other things which come together under his authority
bpr.n sn im
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2 The earth deity Gb is also associated with an "ancient time." We see such expressions as "the god of time," "since the time of Re," "years of Geb" which is why among the Basaa, Koba is also the God of "time" (see the works of Oum Ndigi, 1996, 1997: 383; ‘Gb/K.b/Ghgb/Kòbá/ Kòbákòbá: Ou le nom du Dieu de la Terre et de l ’oiseau créateur mythologique chez les Égyptiens et les Basaá du Cameroun’, Bulletin: Société d’Égyptologie (Genève), 20, 1996: 49-70.). In part it is related to: (Basaa, Duala, Ewondo) koba "formally, ancient times"; ndee koba "time" or "ancient"; mbok Koba "old world" (mbok > koba in reverse).

3 However, there is no ntr determinant in this example.
and in which they took form.

Thus were gathered in him all the gods and their kas, happy and united in the Lord of the Two Lands

So we are seeing a range of personifications that includes all manner of being, thus making creation ntr just like the Divine who is also called ntr. In the book *The Egyptian Book of Life: Symbolism of Ancient Egyptian Temple and Tomb Art* By Melissa Littlefield Applegate (2000:177), the word ntr is defined as:

- neter/netert/neteroo - Archetypal principles such as wind, moisture, earth, sky death, birth, love, evil, etc., that are portrayed in Egyptian cosmology as gods and goddesses, animals, plants, or a combination of these elements. Neter expresses the masculine gender (i.e., the neter Thoth), netert the feminine gender (i.e., the netert Isis) and neteroo plural (more than one).

Applegate reinforces this notion that the word ntr applies to all manner of being. Although many Egyptologists argue that the word ntr means “god” in the modern sense, this is not wholly accurate.4 As Bilolo (2010, 2011) and Imhotep (Forthcoming-A) have confirmed, this term, ntr, is (on one level) really a word for “primordial cause, to give birth, one who causes many generations, an engenderer.” This is reflected in ciLuba as lela “birth, give birth, produce”; “cause, source, generate”; “a family, a home”; “adopt, educate, raise”; “subject, submit”; ndela “prolific person, with many children”; ndelànganyi “offspring, descendants, generations”; ndelelu “descendants, generation”; ndelelu Mulenga “family planning”; ndelu “generations, offspring, progeny.” A ntr [ndele(a,u)] is a foundational force which brings about a certain type of existence: a mother or father principle. See Imhotep (Forthcoming-A) for more details.

Continuing, in the book *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, Richard Wilkinson gives us some more insight into the term ntr. He goes on to state that:

- The ancient Egyptians visualized their gods and goddesses in manifold ways, and this is demonstrated by the Egyptian word netcher, the etymology and original meaning of which are unknown, although examination of the word's use by the Egyptians shows that it actually encompassed a far wider range of meanings than the English word god. It could include deified humans (famous individuals, and from the 30th dynasty, those who had drowned) as well as what might be called spirits and demons, or in some cases even monsters such as the great chaos serpent Apophis. In fact, a determinative sign indicating 'god' (see box, Writing the Names of the Gods) could be added to the name of any unusual or exotic creature and even the Egyptians' hieroglyphs were themselves sometimes regarded as 'gods'. (Wilkinson, 2002: 26)

Wilkinson adds to the discussion that it didn’t matter the character of the being (i.e., “good” or “bad”), all spirits or demons are ntr. This further strengthens our case for a consubstantial conceptualization of being among the ancient Egyptians.

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4 However, it should be noted that the word ntr and god are in fact the same word, just dialectical variations of each other. This is explained in more detail in Imhotep (Forthcoming-A). For now, the Egyptian /t/ sound was originally a /k/ or /kʰ/ and through sound mutation k> t, which itself may actually be a /t/ sound (see Toby Wilkinson, 1999: 376). The n- in ntr is a prefix. So the ancestral root is actually kr, not tr. This root in Bantu is kulu (in isiZulu nkulunkulu; reduplication) and in proto-Bantu times was *kudu or *godo. This is present in the Indo-European and Germanic as well. So nkulu becomes ntr in Egyptian. It is also the root of the word Hrw “Horus.”
This idea that the Creator, essentially, is all that exists and that this existence derives from inside the Creator is not relegated to ancient Egypt. Among the Baluba of the Kongo we see this same type of conceptualization expressed in their philosophical initiatory text. They inform us that:

At the beginning of all things (in the universe), the spirit Maweja Nangila, the first, the elder, the great lord of all spirits appearing subsequently, came into being, alone, and by himself. His first act then was to create the spirits. He created them, not as he created other things, but by a transmutation of his own self. By magic he divided himself, while yet retaining his wholeness. (Obenga 2004: 70)\(^5\)

Here it is clear that in the Luba initiatory text, the Divine divided himself and those divisions became creation as we know it, and will become creation in a different guise in the future (evolution). Creation in the African context is not a fixed ordeal; it is an ongoing project. For this reason we speak more so of “creations” or “evolutions” to be more accurate.

These ongoing evolutions bring form to the matter which has always existed. In a praise poem to the god Ptah (“The Hymn to Ptah”) it states:

Hail to you before your primordial ones
You created after you came into being as God \(ntr\)
**the Body who built his body himself**
Before heaven came into being, before earth came into being
Before the waters were introduced
You tied together the world
**You brought together your flesh:** you considered your parts
You found yourself alone. Placemaker.
God who fashioned the Two Lands.

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You joined together yourself
Active one who came forth active
You stood up on the land in its inertness and
It pulled itself together afterwards
Your being in the form of Tatenen [emphasis mine] (Karenga, 2006: 182)\(^6\)

We are seeing here that the Egyptians are speaking in a language that suggests that in the beginning there was a physical substance already present from which the \(ntrw\) and all forms of life were formed. This substance had gone through a differentiation process and the Supreme Creative Principle “joined together himself” and gave that substance specific forms and functions.

The famous 18\(^{th}\) Dynasty *Nswt* (King) Akhenaten, in his *Hymn to Aten*, reaffirms these sentiments:

\(Ir.k\ hh n hprw im.k\)
You created millions of forms of yourself,
\(w.ti\)
while alone:
\(nivwt\ \ dmtw\ \ sbywt\ \ m-\ \ tnr\ \ w3t\ \ itrw\ \ r\ \ mw\)
Towns, districts, fields, ways, rivers

And you made all creatures rise for your son, offspring of your body (Obenga, 2004: 103-104)

As we can see here, *Itn*, the Creator *ntr*, created “millions of forms” of himself. In other words, that which exists is a form of the Divine. Understanding this filial relationship, Akhenaten then states that he is the “offspring of your (*Itn*) body.” Akhenaten understood quite well his consubstantial nature with the Divine and expressed this in his hymn.

The *Book of Knowing Ra’s Ways of Being* (Papyrus Bremner Rhind, pp. 69-70; 4th century BCE) sheds some more light on this notion of consubstantiality of the universe.

The book of knowing Ra’s ways of being, and of thus overcoming the serpent Apep.

Thus spoke the Lord of the Universe. He said:

Thus I came into existence in the Primal Time. After that beginning a host of ways of being came into existence,

(for before then) there was no mode of existence whatsoever in this world.

All that I did I accomplished alone, before any other being came into existence to create alongside me in these places. There I created the modes of being with the energy in me. There I created in

Nwn, while still drowsy, while I had yet to find any ground
on which to stand upright. But then my heart was filled with energy

$sntt\ i\ m\ hr.i$

Ithe design of creation appeared before me, and

$iri.n.i\ irry\ nbt\ wci.kwi$

I accomplished everything I wanted to do, being alone.

$sntt.n.i\ m\ ib.i\ km\ i.n.i\ ky\ hprw$

Conceiving designs in my heart, I created a different mode of existence

$sst\ hpry\ mw\ hprl$

and multitudinous ways of being were born of the Existent (Obenga 2004: 61-63)

Some have labeled this text "Knowing the evolutions of Ra" or "Knowing the transformations of Ra." The title of this text alone informs us of an evolutionary (hprw) process. One can only evolve something from that which had a previous state/form. Nothingness, non-materiality does not evolve. There is no concept in this text that creation happened ex nihilo outside of the Creator. We get just the opposite.

When the text states that the Creator came into being in his manner of being, "taking on existence as what exists," this is a clear statement that what exist exists from that which has always existed (primordial matter). In other words, existence is the Creator itself: it is all that is (the Existent). In the Abrahamic faiths they argue about monotheism vs. polytheism. In the African world-view, one could never be a polytheist because God is the only thing that exists: it is existence itself.

Another translation of the Book of Knowing the evolutions of Ra (The Heliopolis Creation Narrative; VI Dynasty, 2300-2150 BCE) says a critically important passage in a slightly different way.

Neither did there exist another who worked with me. I made a place in my own heart by my own will and created the multitudes of things which came into being of the things which came into being from out of the things which came into being of births, from out of the things which came into being of their births. (Asante and Abarry, 1996: 14)

This passage explicitly informs us that what was made was made from that which existed since primordial times. What came to be, is, because of a process of evolutions enacted on the things which came into being during the first time (tp spy). Not only that, that which came to “be” also gave birth to other “beings” according to the Heliopolitan text. So that which is created is a source of creation as well (both product and producer). This, in part, reafirms our definition of ntr in the Egyptian language (“that which gives birth, primordial cause, basis/foundation”).

More confirmation of this paradigm can be seen in the following:

I became effective in my heart/mind
I surveyed with my sight
I made everything which was made alone
I laid the foundation in my heart/mind
I created other forms of existence

**And many were the forms of the Bringer-into-Being (hprr)**
(pBremner-Rhind 28.24-25)

This is a creative process, marked by a divine self-transformation, expansion and differentiation. Creation, then is the Divine developing into various forms, an evolution from his essence which is the Nwn (“the father of all gods”). Creation is the interrelated expression of the Creator’s ib (heart/mind).
This can be seen in the very lexicon of ancient Egypt as the same word used for the Creator is the same word associated with creation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hprr</th>
<th>existence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hprw</th>
<th>Living men and women (human beings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hprw</th>
<th>Those living now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hpr</th>
<th>children</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hprw</th>
<th>Form, shape, modes of being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>![Character]</td>
<td>![Character]</td>
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</table>

The very word hpr/hprr/hprw covers any and all aspects of being; even human-BEINGS are called hprw. This makes perfect sense when we consider that hpr is the Nwn differentiated and the Nwn itself is infinite/eternal. Therefore, any and all conceptualizations is a “form” (hprw) of the Nwn which is a singularity; a totality of totalities. James Allen defines hprw as “developments” which is still in alignment with our interpretations here. As Allen (1988: 30) posits:

The process continued geometrically, through the transmission of the original matter into the elements of the world: ‘the developments of developments became many…

And Allen concludes:

In this way the infinite variety of all existence can be traced back to a single ultimate source, a linear progression that is symbolized in the image of the Ennead.

As we can see by the determinative here, hprr is a ntr and by extension, since hprr is all existence, everything in existence is a ntr, including human beings. The Egyptians made sure to remind us of this for the very word s “mankind” is also depicted with the ntr determinative:

\[ s = \text{“mankind, someone, anyone, man of high rank, no one”} \]

This is so, as well, because of the transmission of essence as described in the ancient texts. As the Pyramid Text 1652 states about the Creator, “You put your arms around them as the arms of ka, that your

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7 Remember that the same name for God is the same name for human beings in many African languages.
essence (ka) may be in them.” Faulkner (1969, 246, 247 n2) translates “ka” in the second instance above also as essence and makes the note that “the second (ka) has here the meaning of ‘essence’ or the like, referring to the divine nature passed on by Atum to his offspring.”

The metaphor of “embracing” (“you put your arms around them”) is what’s being used to denote “transmission.” The Creator essentially cloaks creation with his arms and this type of embracing itself is also a metaphor of unity, a reaffirmation of oneness of the Creator and his creation (Karenga, 2006: 197).

The transmission of the ka is the transmission of the Divine’s essence or nature. Frankfort (1948b: 68; cited in Karenga 2006: 197) states, “It is the ka which makes a person into the man he is; (and) it is through one’s ka that one can achieve something.” The shared essence or nature with the Divine is a fundamental staple in Maatian anthropology and is central to the concept of human potentiality, power and agency. In the Shabaka creation text this notion of transmission is also reaffirmed when it states:

\[\text{[Pt h] hpr m ns}\]
he comes to existence through the tongue,
\[\text{tw wr3 Pt h swd} 3 \text{ hty. f n nPrw nbw k Aw.sn}\]
great and powerful Ptah, who transmitted his power to all the gods and their kas

Other sections of this original text\(^9\) is translated as follows:

Ptah taught that aspects of himself are manifested in all nature, in the mouth of all gods, and in every human, and in animals, plants and all other living things…It was spoken of Ptah: “The one who created everything and brought gods into being.” He is indeed Tatenen, who created the gods, for everything emerged from him, nourishment and provisions, the offerings to the gods, and all good things.” (Asante and Abarry, 1996: 16).

Everywhere we examine the creation philosophy of the ancient Egyptians, we are confronted with their belief that all life is connected, and not in superficial ways. All things are consubstantial with the Divine because all things are expressions of the Divine experiencing itself in an infinite amount of forms.

**The Divine as Existence**

Another way to say “what exists” in the ancient Egyptian language is wnnt. This term wnnt derives from the same root as the word nw or nwn in the Egyptian language. We have the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wnnt</th>
<th>what exists (wnnt-nbt “everything”; Wb I S 310)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wnnt</td>
<td>“people” [Wb I S 310]; njwt “people, citizens”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wnnt</td>
<td>thing, anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wn</td>
<td>substance, nature, character</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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This root becomes *na, ni, ntu, lu, tu*, etc., “thing, existence, essence” (*ni* “spirit) in the Ba-NTU languages. In ciLuba this can be *ne “to be”*, -ē*na* “be, exist”\(^\text{10}\), cyē*na* “to still be”; Di*Nana* or Ci*Nene* “matrix, womb”; ci*Nu* “foundation, basis”; *ntu “being”\(^\text{11}\), Nyo- “empty”; (Nyin, Ci*m-a-ci*Mamu, Di*Nan*, Ci*Nen*, etc.). Egyptian *wn(n)* belongs to the same root that gives way to ciLuba cy*Ena* (<*ena*) "object belonging to, family member of; "owner, possessor, who has" [mw*Ena*, bw*Ena* “master, lord, owner”]; "who is responsible for, manufactures, sells"; "originating from"; "characterized in, having the quality of."

We find this root in the Egyptian language with the same meanings as found in Bantu. As stated previously, *wn(n)* “to exist” is a dialectical variation of the word *ntu* “existence/being.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>ntu</em></th>
<th>Budge 400b – Those who [exist] – man/beings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ntu</em></td>
<td>Budge 170a – People, men and women, society, folk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ntu</em></td>
<td>Budge 170a – Things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In ciLuba we have -*ntu* "existing" (human, object, place) (Igbo *ndu* “life”); nt*anyi* "person, object or place that you do not know by name"; ci*Ntu* "object, thing"; ci*Ntu* "man of authority, person of disproportionate size"; ka*ntu* "little thing, insignificant person, wealth"; ku*ntu* "outside location, location unknown"; lu*ntu* "person of excessive dimension"; mu*ntu* "person, man, human"; mu*ntu* "place within"; pa*ntu* "location relative to the surface."

Just as in the case with *hpr* “being, to come into being, evolution, development, people/humankind, etc.,” all of the gods (*ntrw*) and existing things are *hprw*.

![hpr]

*hpr* “entity, being” (god)

*ir hpr* ?? Creator of the World [ noun - div. ]

As noted earlier, the so-called names for the major “gods” are in reality epithets for the one Creator. *Hpr* is a different epithet to describe an aspect of the *Nwn*. Epithets can number in the hundreds for the Divine which gives the false impression that polytheism is the paradigm of African people. They only describe the aspects of the Divine’s functions or actions: e.g., as "Creator," "Lord of all that is", "All-Nothing", "Hidden/Unknown", "Nameless", "Polyonyme", "Sun", "Sun-Moon", "Light," "Water of Life", "Air invigorating," "The-One", "Be", "Who gives being", "Grand Architect or Modeler", "Artist par excellence", "Neter", "Neter- neteru ", "King ", "King of kings ", etc..

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\(^{10}\) See Sumerian *e-ne* "he, she"; *ni" he, she, it"; *na" human-being"; *ni" man"; *e" he, she, it, this" (loss of *n-*)

\(^{11}\) Egyptian *ntt* “that which is, that, who, who is, that is”; *ntw* “she, they, it.”
The primacy given to one of these "epithets" or these "titles" of these "metaphors/metonymies" depends on the person, region, time, place, text and context. A good example is in the different contexts for what we call the Divine among BaLuba: Mulopo "Chief"; Maweja "Winnower-Avenger", "The Intelligent"; Mvidi-Mukulu "Supreme-Being-/Primordial/-Elder/Eldest/-Most Ancient," Diba katangidibwa mumpa "Sun which cannot look in the face", etc.. But every subculture has its preferences among the Luba. In one instance one prefers Mulopo, the other prefers Maweja, the other still Nzambi or Mvidi-Mukulu. The Analogy between Luba thought and the thought as manifested in Pharaonic Egypt, allows us to interpret ancient texts in the light of the current experience.

With this said, sometimes the epithets used for the Divine is also used for mankind. Amadou Hampate Bâ of Mali, in his article “The Living Tradition” (Zerbo, 1981) informs us how man shared the same name as the Divine. After discussing how creation (within the bounds of a cosmic egg) and the primordial agents came to be in the Bambara and Fulani experience, Bâ informs us that:

> When this primordial Egg came to hatch, it gave birth to twenty marvellous beings that made up the whole of the universe, the sum total of existing forces and possible knowledges. But alas! None of those first twenty creatures proved fit to become the interlocutor (Kuma-nyon) that Maa Ngala had craved. So he took a bit of each of those twenty existing creatures and mixed them; and then, blowing a spark of his own fiery breath into the mixture, he created a new Being, Man, to whom he gave a part of his own name: Maa. And so this new being, through his name and through the divine spark introduced into him, contained something of Maa Ngala himself.’ (Ki-Zerbo, 1981: 169).

So we see here that man got its name (maa) from the Divine (Maa Ngala) because man “contained something of Maa Ngala himself.” In other words, man is made of the same substance as Maa Ngala, just in a smaller quantity. With this understanding we can see the same process going on Egypt with wn(n)>ntu. All things, concepts and beings are ntu and so are the gods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wn</th>
<th>ntw - &quot;gods&quot; (Budge 400b)</th>
<th>As Janheinz Jahn notes in his work MUNTU (1961:18), “Muntu embraces living and dead, ancestors and deified ancestors: gods.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ntwj</td>
<td>[Name of God] Wb I S 325</td>
<td>ciLuba ciNtu “man of authority”?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also notice that human beings (ntu “those who”) are represented also with the ntr determinative:

As we can see, the word for the Divine wn “substance, nature, character”; wnnt “what exist, anything, thing”; wnntj “Name for God”; ntw “gods”; is also the same name for human-beings: wnnjw “people.” The Creator, materiality and human-beings all share the same essence (wn) and thus this connection is shared lexically with slight variations in spelling and pronunciation. The human-being is divine because the Creator is Divine.
The root -n- is found in many African languages and has morphed to mean a variety of things within a central conceptual framework:

**HE, SHE, IT, THIS**  

*HE, SHE, IT, THIS*  

**Sumerian e-ne “he, she”**  

**NA, NI “that”**  

*PWS na “this”, Nupe a-na “this”, Akpafu ne “this”  

**Sumerian ni “he, she, it”**  

**Mande ni “this”**  

**Sumerian na “human being”**  

**Mangbetu na- “possessive adjective”**  

**Sumerian e “he, she, it, this”**

*N = n  
*I = e  
*A = e

**HERO**  

*HERO*  

**Sumerian nir-ĝal₂ “prince, hero”**  

**NI “man”**  

**GA “big”**  

*PWS ni “man”, Kele ūt-r “person”, Gba ni-ri “person”  

**PWN ni “man”**  

**GA “big”**

*N = n  
*I = i  
*A = a

**MAN**  

*MAN*  

**Sumerian nita₂, ni “man”**  

**NI “man”**

**TA “man” ?**  

*PWS ni, Wolof nit “man”  

**PWN NINTU, NITU “man”**  

**Bantu –ini, “master”, “owner”**  

**Swahili ntu “man”**  

“Holoholo” ntu “man”  

“Holoholo” ní, baani, “who”  

**Mande kyë-ni “young man”**

*N = n  
*I = i  
*T = t

*[Afro-Asiatic (Ehret): Cushitic: EC: Soomaali – II, *zat “person” (stem + *t [n. suff.] ) perhaps explains the –tah. Sumerian has tab “companion”, and da “arm, to be at the side of, to protect” however, which may be a better explanation.]

*[Greek a-ne-ros, a-n-d-ros (genit.) “man” is prefixed and suffixed.]*
MAN

Sumerian *mu* “man”

MU “man”
LU “head”

PWS *lu* “head”
PWN TUI “head”
Bangi *mutu* “head”
Kongo *muntu* “man”, Ngala, Poto, Ngombe *motu* “man”, Swahili *mtu* “man”
Mande *mu* “person”
Mangbetu *mu* “friend”, dru “head”

[Prefix *mu-*. Bantu *tu* means “head”].

*L = l*  
*U = u*  
*M = m*  
*U = u*

MAN, WOMAN

Sumerian *mu*,(*mulu*, *munus*)

MU “person”
NU “person”

PWS *nu*, *ni* “person”
PWN NINTU (NITU) “person, man”
“Bantu” (Johnston 1922: 343) *mui* “man”
“Bantu” (Johnston 1922: 418) *omuntu* “woman”
Mande *musu* “woman”
Mande *mòg, ò*, *moko* “man”, *mu* “person”
Mangbetu *mu* “friend”
Afro-Asiatic : Chad : Musgu *muni* “woman”

*M = m*  
*U = u*

MAN

Sumerian *nu* “man”

NU “person”

PWS *nu* “person”, “man”
PWS *ti* “head”
PWN NINTU, (NITU) “person, man”
Bantu *tue* “head”
Bantu *ntu* “person”
Mangbetu *ndro* “woman”
Mangbetu *nito*, *noro* “third personal pronoun”
Mande *ni* ou *ni* “this”

[ Nasal grade of *tu* “head”]

*N = n*  
*U = u*

There was never a time in Egyptian history when there was no being (-n/-nn-). The Egyptians distinguished between two types of being/existence. The first type of being was a singularity, a *non-differentiated* fluidity, eternal and timeless. The other type of being was *differentiated* being where the
one \( (Nwn/Nw) \) became many \( (hprw/ntw/wntw) \). This is supported in the \book{Book of Knowing Ra’s Ways of Being} when it states:

\begin{verbatim}
  iri.n.i irry nbt w\textasciitilde; i.kwi
  I accomplished everything I wanted to do, being alone.
  sn\text{t}t.n.i m lb.i kmj.n.i ky hprw
  Conceiving designs in my heart, I created a different mode of existence
  \textasciitilde;st hpry nw hpr\textit{i}
  and multitudinous ways of being were born of the Existent
\end{verbatim}

So the \( Nwn \), in the form of \( Hpr \), instituted two types of being: one inert and one active. This is reinforced in the \book{Hymn to Ptah} (already cited) when it states:

\begin{verbatim}
  You joined together yourself
  Active one who came forth active
  You stood up on the land in its inertness and
  It pulled itself together afterwards
  Your being in the form of Tatenen [emphasis mine] \( (\text{Karenga, 2006: 182}) \)
\end{verbatim}

\( Nwn \) is \textit{inactive being}, while \( Pt\text{h} \) (i.e., \( R^\text{'}, \text{Imn}, \text{Wsr}, \text{etc.} \)) is \textit{active being}. The Bambara initiatory text of West Africa, told to us by Amadou Hampate Bâ, adds symmetry to the Egyptian initiatory text, but the Bambara posit 9 states of existence.

\begin{verbatim}
  There was nothing except a Being.
  That Being was a living Emptiness,
  brooding potentially over contingent existences.
  Infinite Time was the abode of that One Being.
  The One Being gave himself the name Maa Ngala.
  Maa Ngala wished to be known.
  So he created Fan,
    a wondrous Egg with nine divisions,
  and into it he introduced the nine fundamental
  states of existence. \( (\text{Zerbo, 1981: 169}) \)
\end{verbatim}

Another variation of the \book{Book of Knowing Ra…} has \( Nb-r-dr \) (Lord of the utmost limits; i.e., the eternal) arising instead out of the \( Nwn \) to begin the process of differentiation, and it too describes a primordial substance as the basis by which all created beings are but variations of.

\begin{verbatim}
  [These are] the words of the god Neb-er-tercher, who said: "I am the creator of what hath come into being, and I myself came into being under the form of the god Khepera, and I came into being in primeval time. I came into being in the form of Khepera, and I am the creator of what did come into being, that is to say, I formed myself out of the primeval matter, and I made and formed myself out of the substance which existed in primeval time. My name is AUSARES (i.e., Osiris), who is the primeval matter of primeval matter.\textsuperscript{12}"
\end{verbatim}

In the cited text above, \( Wsr \) (Osiris) is described as the primordial being from which creation arises. In the ciLuba language \( Wsr \) can be vocalized as \textit{cy\text{a}Shilu} "start, commence, at the beginning"; "foundation";

\textsuperscript{12} \url{http://www.touregypt.net/creationhistory.htm} (retrieved October 4, 2012)
"realization" (<aasa "construct, build, undertake, reside, settle").

13 Wsr (Yoruba Èṣù, àṣẹ) is the engenderer of all creation; the active principle that makes things to “be” in their active and differentiated form (Imhotep 2011, 2012). As we can see here, Wsr is also depicted as the very substance from which forms derive. These variations we are witnessing are the result of various stories told by different nomes and ethnic sub-groups within the Egyptian state. Certain names would be more prominent and replace other names given the time period, region and who was in power at the time. No matter the name, the essential essence stays the same: from primordial matter (a singularity) evolves multiple ways of being.

**Itm as a First Cause**

In the *Papyrus of Ani* (see Wasserman 2008) it is *Itm* that first arises from the *Nwn*. As we know, the *Nwn* is the primordial waters. It should be noted that *jtm* can mean “waters” as well [Wb I S 144].

In the Yoruba language *Itm* is represented by the first beings to cause generations known as *Adimu*. There is a funerary ceremony of the Aholi/Awori in Lagos called *Èyò* or *Âdâmù Òrìṣà*.

When a person of high stature dies, some years later the family petitions to the *Ọba* (king) for permission to perform the *Âdâmù Òrìṣà* ceremony so that the *Èyò* (masquerades) may come out and take to themselves the soul of the departed (Oduyoye, 1984: 19). The first *Èyò* to come out during the ceremony is the most senior and it is called *Âdâmù Òrìṣà*. (Hebrew ‘adam ri’s-ò”n “the first ancestors spirits”; see Genesis 5). This *d-m* root is expressed in other African languages as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Èdàmù / Adimu</strong> (Yoruba)</th>
<th>The first of the ancestors long dead but come back to celebrate with the living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mu-Dzimu/Mi-Dzimu</strong> (Shona-Bantu)</td>
<td>Ancestral spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ama-zimu</strong> (Ndebele)</td>
<td>Human-like creatures believed to be inhabiting thick forests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n-dem</strong> (Ibibio)</td>
<td>Clan deities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mo-Dimo</strong> (Se-Tswana-Bantu)</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atum/At-Mu</strong> (Egyptian)</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aduno</strong> (Dogon)</td>
<td>Universe?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The name Adam of the Biblical myth derives from this *d-m* root. Adam is the progenitor of all of mankind. It is not to be taken as if Adam was a human being who gave birth to all of mankind, but the vital life principle (the source) from which man derived. Adam belongs to the Afrasan *d-m* root which is found in the Hebrew word *dam* “blood” and *dem-ut* “vitality.” It should be noted that this *d-m* root is associated with the color red which explains the feminine version of the word Adam in Hebrew, *adam-ah* “red soil,” and *Edom* (Esau) who was born “ruddy” in Genesis 25:25. Adam meant “red” and “alive” and

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13 This root may also be reflected in Hebrew šelah “dart” and kiSwahili *m-šale* “arrow.” Both nouns may derive from the verb meaning to “project, to shoot forth.”

14 It should be noted here that the [j] sound given for the *j* glyph is believed to be an [i] sound. I use [I] when speaking about the god *Imn* and keep the conventional [j] transliteration with all other instances *j*. Therefore, for the layman, *j = i*. 
“red” is still used today, in languages of the Slavic family, to signify “living” and “beautiful” (Danesi, 2004: 146). This $d$-$m$ root is $t$-$m$ in Egyptian and is reflected in the following terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$t$-$m$ root</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$tms$</td>
<td>“red, ruddy, violet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tms$</td>
<td>“red, ruddy, violet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tmHy$</td>
<td>“red ochre”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tmHw$</td>
<td>“Libyans” (of the desert, red land).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$tmyw$</td>
<td>“bad mannered people.” (Often the Libyans were seen as enemies. The Libyans may have become a euphemism to the Egyptians).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Africa, the same name for God is often the same name for man. It is no surprise then to find this $d$-$m$ ($t$-$m$) root in Egyptian related to mankind. In the Biblical myth ‘$adam$ also represents mankind.

$T3$ $tmw$ = all mankind, humanity

$Itm$ is the principle that gives rise to being: it is that which gives birth. In ciLuba this is reflected as -$tûma$ “send, sending, forward, come forth,” $tûmununa$ "get moving"; $tûmakaja$ "send from left to right, continually send," $lutûmu$ "habit of giving orders, ordering, sending people," $mutûmi$ "person who sends, sender"; Kalenjiin -$tuûm$ “give birth” ($ituûm$ “to pass a candidate through an initiation ceremony, a kind of rebirth”).

Everywhere we look in Egyptian cosmology, the same name used for the Divine is also used for creation itself, the process of creating and/or human-beings. The ancient Egyptians created many myths and stories which conveyed these concepts in various creative ways. We will now take a look into the various meanings of the word $Nwn$, the primordial substance from which all life derived.

**$Nwn$, the Father of the Gods**

In Chapter 17 of the Book of Coming Forth by Day (Book of the Dead), the following statement is made:

$Mw$ $nw$

It is the waters,

---

15 The root $tuûm$ in Kalenjiin can also mean “the completion of a process after which the object, or individual so affected, becomes whole (Sambu, 2007: 37). This is essentially the same association given to $Itm$ in the ancient Egyptian context (see Piankoff, 1957:12).
Nwn nw it nTRw
It is Nwn, father of the gods (Obenga, 2004: 43-44)

Here the Nwn is explicitly stated to be the “father” of the nTRw. This means that in the Egyptian reality, Nwn is the most absolute Creator. It is the only deity in Egyptian cosmology that was never begotten by other gods. Some texts may state that the other nTRw are forms or aspects of the Nwn, but all of those deities/concepts are stated to have been “born in the Nwn,” therefore making the Nwn the ultimate Supreme Being, the most senior.

The Nwn is a singularity and an infinite totality. Nothing can exist outside of the Nwn, therefore, all things are the Nwn differentiated. As Karenga (2006: 392) notes, “For all that exists (wnnt) emanates from the Creator who broadens out, invests himself in the construction of existence, and brings being into being and then all other beings thereafter (Book of Knowing the Creations, 26.21ff).”

This is a major theme throughout the Egyptian Book of the Dead:

I am Ra who [came] from Nu, the divine Soul, the creator of his own limbs. Sin is an abomination unto me and I look not thereon; I cry not out against right and truth, but I have my being therein. I am the god Hu, and I never die in my name of “Soul.” I have brought myself into being together with Nu in my name of Khepera. In their forms I have come into being in the likeness of Ra. I am the lord of light. (Budge, 1967: 338)

James Wasserman, in his updated translation, interprets this (extended) passage as:

Chapter for being transformed into the soul of Atum and not entering the place of execution. He who knows it will never perish.

I am the soul of Ra who issued from the Primordial Water (Nw), the soul of the god (nTR) who created authority. Wrongdoing is my detestation, and I will not see it; I think about righteousness, and I live by it; I am Authority which will never perish in this my name of ‘Soul’. I came into being of myself with the Primordial Water (Nw) in this my name of Khepri, and I come into being in It daily. […] I am Nun, and the doers of wrong cannot harm me. I am the eldest of the primeval gods, the soul of the souls of the eternal gods; my body is everlasting, my shape is eternity, Lord of years, Ruler of Everlasting. I am he who created darkness and who made his seat in the limits of the sky. I desire to reach their limits, and I walk afoot, I go ahead with my staff, I cross the firmament of those who..., I drive away the hidden snakes which are upon my march to the Lord of the Two Regions…. (Wasserman, 2008: Chapter 85, pl.27)

The Nwn is seen as the ultimate creator of all things, the most senior of beings and is often seen as having a direct hand in creating certain human beings directly. An example can be gleaned from the following passage from the Pyramid Texts Utterance 607, § 1701.
The Nwn is often described as "Infinity," "Nothingness" and "Nowhere," among other names. I argue here that the very name Nw/Nwn is polysemous and is actually a play on words and themes. The root is -nw- and the form nwn is simply a reduplication of nw (a reduction of nwnw). The word nw means “water” and nwnw means “celestial ocean.” Reduplication in African languages is done to add intensity, grandeur and for emphasis of a given concept. So we get a amplified sense of the root concept by doubling the term that represents it.

I argue that /n-/ form of nw is a nasal-grade of /l-/ which denotes “dimensionality” within a spatial context. This can be seen in the ciLuba roots:

- le(a) "long, large, above"
- lee, le "big, tall, high"
- leepa "stretch, become longer, grow, last"

We argue here that the common interpretation of nw/nwn as “water” is short-sighted. The picture of water is really pointing us into a different direction. When you look out into an ocean from the shores, it looks infinite, as if there is no edge or limites to the ocean’s expanse (that it goes on forever). This is why the term nw was reduplicated to denote the vastness of the primordial fluidity. So the term stands for “infinity.”

The Egyptian nw/nwn is present in the ciLuba language and can be found in the following forms: mene “true (absolute) being”; munene “grand, great” (<nene); nunu “eternal” (also “old, ancient”); nene, nan “pure limitless expanse, universal, without limit”; dinana “stretch” (<nana “extend, stretch, lie”). This concept of “length” and “space” is also associated with “time.”

An epithet for the Divine among the Bindi and Cokwe (languages spoken in the Kasayi region of Zaire and Angola) is Ga-Nunu “The Old” and Ga-Kulu “The Old/Primordial.” The Primordial Spirit among the Baluba is known as Mvidi-MuNene "Spirit/God (eminently) Great" (Bilolo, 1986: 24). The Bantu of the Kongo and Angola still worship the Nwn and studying these languages provides us with possible insights into the ancient conceptualization of the Primordial Divine (Mvidi-MuNene / Nwn).

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16 This term has reflexes in ciLuba as nwa "drink"; bunu "drunkenness"; kanwayi "drunk"; nwika "be drinkable"; munwi "drinker."
In the Egyptian myths Imn is often discussed as arising from the Nwn. Many Egyptologists interpret this name to mean “the hidden,” but I argue that this is not the case when we discuss Imn arising from the Nwn. Imn can’t be hidden if he is the first active principle to come from the inertness of Nwn. Therefore, I argue that Imn is actually a pun on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imn</th>
<th>to create, to shape [verb]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imn</td>
<td>abode ?, place to stay? [noun - arch.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imn is at once the initial creative force, and at the same time, he is representative of the “space” that was created from the singularity that is the Nwn. This idea of “space” is conveyed in the Heliopolitan myths which introduce to us the bnbn stone (shown below) as arising from the Nwn.

The bnbn stone represents the primordial mound for which creation was made by Atum-Ra (equivalent to tꜣt nn). We argue here that the bnbn symbolizes the “expansion” (of space) out of the singularity for which creation had “room” to differentiate and move about (time). This is reflected in the following terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bnbn</th>
<th>to stretch out [verb]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bnbn</td>
<td>to become erect [verb]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bnbn “stretched out” (created space) within the Nwn (which is now the outlying area of creation) and from here, Atum-Ra self-copulated and brought forth creation out of himself (he became erect and erected form out of the Nwn).

Utterance 600 of the Pyramid Texts says: “O Atum-Khopper, you became high on the height, you rose up as the bnbn-stone in the Mansion of the Phoenix at On.” This concept of being “erect” and “stretching
“out” is rooted in the -n- root which in ciLuba becomes: munene “grand, great” (<nene); nunu “eternal” (also “old, ancient”); nene, nan “pure limitless expanse, universal, without limit”; dinana “stretch” (<nana “extend, stretch, lie”).

Remember our statement from Karenga (2006: 392):

For all that exists (wnnt) emanates from the Creator who broadens out, invests himself in the construction of existence, and brings being into being and then all other beings thereafter (Book of Knowing the Creations, 26.21ff). (emphasis mine)

This idea of “stretching” and “extended” applies to Imn (<jmn “create, to shape, abode, place to stay”) which is reflected in ciLuba as ciMana “black earth,” and “partition, wall.” Imn, as a result of rising out of the Nwn and spreading out, created a “wall” (ciMana) that divided the finite from the infinity. So what the myth is telling us is that from eternity (Nwn) comes the finite (dr “limits”) and Imn became the dividing line. All the creation myths are telling us how the Divine created limits within the limitless.

We see the -n- (<l) root reflected in the following African languages:

### GREAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumerian</th>
<th>nun “big”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NU, (KU)</td>
<td>“big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS kui</td>
<td>“big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS kuni</td>
<td>“husband”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS nu</td>
<td>“person, man”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN Kül</td>
<td>“old”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN KWUL</td>
<td>“be big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu nène</td>
<td>“big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu nu, n-u, “old”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mande kunu</td>
<td>“too big”, “old (garment)”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Sumerian (like Maori nui) has a nasal grade of this word : probably reduplicated.]

*K = n  
*U = u  
*N = n

The underlying themes here are “measure, space, distance” and “time.” This is further reflected in ciLuba as–nya>munya, mwinya >”nanu”; nanunanu; nanwija, -nanuja/-nanusha; nanuna; nanukila; nanuka; mananu (Bilolo, 2011: 160). This root deals with “duration, continuity, prolixity (wordiness, going on for a long period of time), elasticity,” therefore “infinite, incommensurability, spatial/temporal.” In Lingala, however, this term (e.g., nanu) means, “in this moment, at this time, now” (ciLuba nanù ”duration, time, length, period, term”).

In Egyptian this root is given as ꜜ nw “time.”
This root can be seen in the following phrases:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{nwn} \quad \text{as soon as} & \text{[temporal]} \\
\hline
\text{nwt} \quad \text{hour goddess (of Uraeus snake)} & \text{[noun - div.]} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

So we argue, again, that the name \text{nw/nwn} is a play on words that not only uses water as a metaphor to denote “substance,” but also puns on the word for “time” to convey the idea of “infinity, eternity” (an ongoing stretching of substance and time).

The personification of this infinity is written as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{nnw / nwn / nw / nww} \quad \text{Nun} & \text{[noun - div.]} \\
\hline
\text{nwnw} \quad \text{Celestial Ocean} & \text{[noun]} \\
\hline
\text{nnw / nwn / nw / nww} \quad \text{Nun} & \text{[noun - div.]} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

We notice in the first two examples the Gardiner N1 sign which is a determinative often used to represent the sky. This sign can be seen in the following Egyptian words:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{hh} \quad \text{sky, heaven} & \text{[noun]} \\
\hline
\text{hy} \quad \text{heaven, sky} & \text{[noun]} \\
\hline
\text{h\textsuperscript{3}t / h\textsuperscript{3}yt} \quad \text{ceiling, portal, heaven} & \text{[noun - arch.]} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

\[\text{17 As noted in Imhotep (forthcoming), the same word for “sky” (nwt \text{ \textsuperscript{\tiny{\textcircled{\text{}}}}} \text{\textcircled{\text{}}}} \text{\textcircled{\text{}}}) in African languages is often the same word for “sun” (nwt \text{\textsuperscript{\tiny{\textcircled{\text{}}}}} \text{\textcircled{\text{}}}} \text{\textcircled{\text{}}} “sun’s rays”).}\]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pt</td>
<td>cover, canopy [noun - arch.] N1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pt / hrt</td>
<td>sky, heaven [noun]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h3yt</td>
<td>portal, hall, lobby, porch [noun - arch.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hry</td>
<td>Head man, Master [noun - title] (sky sign used to denote “above, on high”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tfrr / iffr</td>
<td>sky, heaven [noun - loc.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lpt(h)</td>
<td>(a name for the sky, heaven?) [noun]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i3sw</td>
<td>sky, heaven (place with no stars) [noun - loc.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hwt</td>
<td>sky, heaven [noun]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isrt</td>
<td>heaven [noun - loc.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rt</td>
<td>heaven, sky [noun - loc.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hrw</td>
<td>those above (in heaven, especially the stars) [noun - astro.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hrt</td>
<td>sky, heaven [noun]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The heavens weren’t always depicted with the N1 determinative. It was sometimes depicted with the “foreign land” determinative as can be seen from the following:

- biA heaven, firmament [noun - loc.]
- sbt heaven [noun - loc.]

The sign is used to denote “immensity” and is that of a canopy which “covers” and “envelops” everything that falls underneath it. So when we see the symbol in the term nwn, we know it is there to inform us that the concept deals with dimensionality. The sign holds no phonetic value in the word nwn/nw. So we know it is there to convey a concept. This glyph helps to inform us that the nwn refers to a sort of “upper heaven.” A variation of this word nw is nwt and is often the name for “lower heaven.” It is personified also as a goddess. Nw is the masculine form and Nwt is the feminine aspect of a central concept.

- Nwt Goddess Nut [noun - div.]

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18 This variation gives us possible clues as to one of the meanings of the name Pth.
It is possible that the N1 sign may have been pronounced something like \( n(u,a) \) “heaven, sky.” This may be supported by the Egyptian lexicon when we consider the terms: \( wntj \) “cover” [Meeks (?)]: AL 781001; \( wnwnjt \) “canopy” [Wb I S 318]; \( wnwnjr \) “of the sky” [Wb I S 318] (see also \( wnwn \) “watch the stars”, Wb I S 318).

Possible connections in African languages give us:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAVEN</th>
<th>Sumerian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TU “fire”</td>
<td>\textit{u}-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA “above”</td>
<td>\textit{u}-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>\textit{na} “above”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SER\( \textit{u} \) “heaven” (Wanger)
“time, night” (Delitzsch)

\| \textit{an} “heaven” |

PWS \( t\ddot{i}a\ddot{a}, (\ddot{i}\ddot{a}) \) “to roast” (of the sun)
PWS \( na \) “above”
Or PWS \( tu, tua \) “water” (rain from sky)?
PWN \( THU, THUA \) “water place”
Bantu \( tu,mb \) “to roast” (compare \( utu \) “the sun”)
“Bantu” \( tuna \) (273), \( tuwana \) (256), “sky”
Bantu to “river”
Mande \( Nala \) “God”? 
Mangbetu \( anana \) “climb tree” (to sky?)
Khoisan : Naron (C) \( /am, /g\text{am} \) “on”? 
Afro-Asiatic : Chad : Hausa (1) \textit{sama} “above”, Logone (2) \textit{sama} “rain”, Mandara (6) \textit{samaya} “sky” (Greenberg)

\( *T = # \)
\( *U = u \)
\( *N = n \)
\( *A = a \)

As we can see here, \( nw, nwnw, wn(n), nnt, nwt \), etc., are used by the Egyptians in a creative way to convey unique theme of interrelated concepts as it pertains to creation. I’d like to suggest one more connection before we leave this topic.

\[ ^{19} \text{Kalenjiin } maan \ "smear, seal, cover"; nem "cover up, assimilate"; nuum "assimilate, cover, conquer"; um "take shelter, cover oneself from rain"; yim "shelter, harbour, defend, hide, shield, take refuge." n>m. \]

\[ ^{20} \text{The Bantu forms } tuna, tuwana "sky" \text{ could be reversed forms of Egyptian } nwt "sky, heavens." \]
As we have stated previously, the \textit{Nwn} is depicted as an “inert” (non-active) state of being in the ancient Egyptian records. I’d like to suggest that this connection is made lexically as the result of a similar sounding word for which the Egyptians punned. This can be seen in the following table:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\text{\textit{nny}}</td>
<td>to lie idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text{\textit{nnyw}}</td>
<td>inert ones (the Dead) [noun]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\text{\textit{nny}}</td>
<td>be weary, inert, drag (of foot), dribble (of fluid), settle (of flood waters) [verb + adjective]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The God \textit{Nu} lifting creation from out of itself and bringing forth the \textit{ntrw}.

The \textit{Nwn} is not only the Divine, but is articulated as a location where other entities return if not worthy of an afterlife (Wilkinson, 2003: 117). In other words, there are spirits that go back into a state of non-being and lose their identity in the \textit{Nwn}. Since the \textit{Nwn/Nw} represents the “sky,” we argue that this is articulated also as the location of the Divine. This is reflected in the term \textit{jwnn} “home of God” [Wb I S 55]. Remember our terms \textit{wnntj} “cover” [Meeks (?); AL 781001]; \textit{wnwnjt} “canopy” [Wb I S 318]; \textit{wnwnjt} “of the sky” [Wb I S 318]; \textit{wnn} “watch the stars”, Wb I S 318). So the \textit{Nwn} is at once the invisible and visible infinite space that covers, envelops and gives birth to all forms of existence: \textit{wnn} “people”; \textit{wnn} “to be, to exist, to live”; \textit{wnnt} “what exists”; \textit{wnnt-nbt} “everything”; \textit{wnnt} “thing, anything”; \textit{wn} “substance, nature, character”; \textit{wnntj} “God.” Therefore, this root covers the gambit of all possible concepts, including the \textit{ntrw}.
Conclusion

In this essay we have examined the Egyptian primary texts to see if there is support for the notion that consubstantiality was the dominant paradigm in Egyptian ontology when it came to the status of creation, the Divine and the ntrw. We have concluded that there is more than enough support for this premise and this view is shared by many prominent Egyptologists in the field. Creation (and its creators) are not only consubstantial with the divine (made from the same substance), but as a result of this consubstantiation, all of creation shares consanguinity (a filial relationship) with the Divine. Not only is this paradigm supported by the Egyptian texts, but this world-view is part of a shared African tradition which sees no fundamental separation between the Divine and creation.

We have concluded that, for the ancient Egyptians, God is an infinity that is at once material and transcendental at the same time. Nothing can exist outside of this infinity and therefore, everything arises and is made from the very substance (wn) of the infinity (hnty). It is known primarily as Nwn or Nw and this singularity, at some point, created space and time (as we know it) and divided itself into “millions of forms.” These forms consist of all conceptualizations to outer-space itself, to the celestial objects, the earth, as well as that which inhabits the earth. Since all things evolve and bring into being other forms of being, all things are ntr, co-creators with the infinite Nwn. We therefore proclaim that the statements made by Dr. Rkhty Amen are thereby vindicated.

Asar Imhotep is a computer programmer and Africana researcher from Houston, TX whose research focus is the cultural, linguistic and philosophical links between the Ancient Egyptian civilizations and modern BaNtu cultures of central and South Africa. He is the founder of the MOCHA-Versity Institute of Philosophy and Research and the Madu-Ndela Institute for the Advancement of Science and Culture. He is also the author of The Bakala of North America, the Living Suns of Vitality: In Search for a Meaningful Name for African-Americans, Passion of the Christ or Passion of Osiris: The Kongo Origins of the Jesus Myth and Ogun, African Fire Philosophy and the Meaning of KMT. Asar is a noted speaker and philosopher and is currently organizing efforts in a nation-wide venture titled The African-American Cultural Development Project—a national project aimed at creating a framework for an African-American culture which will help vitally stimulate the economic, political, scientific and cultural spheres of African-American life in the United States.
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