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Die Zauberflöte and the Moral Law of Opposing Forces

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Abstract

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, set to Schikaneder's libretto, brings to the forefront the Enlightenment models of light and darkness, good and evil. The traditional understanding of these concepts pits light against darkness, and good against evil. This thesis contends that *Die Zauberflöte* is a work which portrays a system that contains both good and evil, rather than one that depicts the clash of good against evil. The ancient Pythagorean Monad and Dyad explain this concept. The Monad, a single number, represented an indivisible principle said to belong to the Olympian Creator Gods, while the Dyad, a dual, divisible law, represented a principle which contained two opposing forces. This principle was the property of the demiurges, who, according to the ancients, rule the earth. The main purpose of the law of contrary forces is to enforce order, and it accomplishes this goal through a system of merit and demerit, rewards and punishments. In this paradigm, Sarastro and the Queen of the Night are symbols of Osiris and Isis, the Egyptian gods who formed a unified godhead operating by the law of opposing forces. Part of this godhead is also Typho, Monostatos in the opera, the representation of pure evil. The significance of ancient Egyptian mysticism is stressed in this study for a better understanding of the opera. To that end, three of the main sources for the libretto, the fables of Christoph Martin Wieland's *Dschinnistan*, Ignaz von Born's *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, and Jean Terrasson's *The Life of Sethos* are explored. In addition, the writings of the Freemasons as well as eighteenth-century literature and philosophy are examined to ascertain the degree to which the system of contrary duality was relevant in Mozart's time.

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GLOSSARY

Anagnorisis: Aristotelian concept involving a reversal of former perception

Apopis: The Egyptian two-faced snake, the enemy of Re, the challenger of divine order

Dichnistan: Literally the land of the Jiin, but also a collection of fairytales assembled by

Dyad: two contrary items of the same kind

Hermes: messenger of the gods, patron of merchants, interpreter of speech,

Horus: Son of Isis and Osiris, embodied good, the opposite of Seth

Initiation: A rite of passage required for acceptance into a secret society or order

Isis: The wife of Osiris, part of the godhead, ruler of Nature

Jiin: Genii, supernatural beings from the spirit world

Maat: The law of opposite forces thought to be the order and harmony of the universe

Mercurius: Alchemical spirit, messenger of the gods, good to the good, evil to the evil

Monad: a term meaning "unit" used to signify an indivisible principle or law

Osiris: Member of the Ennead, killed by his brother Seth, embodiment of benevolence

Psychopomp: Conductor of the soul into the afterlife

Psychostasia: Judgment of the dead in the Hall of Double Righteousness

Re: Egyptian sun god

Recognition: A shift from ignorance to knowledge involving a reversal of former understanding

Seth: The one who killed his brother Osiris; embodied 'evil,' the opposite of Horus

Thoth: The Egyptian scribe and Psychopompos, also a messenger of the gods

Typho: Another name for Seth, the embodiment of Evil

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INTRODUCTION

Die Zauberflöte (September, 1791) was written during the age of the European Enlightenment, a time of momentous philosophical, cultural, and religious shifts in the Western world, and of great expansion of knowledge.¹ Set in a mystical Egyptian context and hailed as a story that portrays the victory of light over darkness, the fairytale-like narrative of *Die Zauberflöte* remains a puzzle. Some have raised the possibility that the opera was a critique of eighteenth-century religion and politics, claiming the Queen was a symbol of the Catholic Church or the political powers during Mozart's lifetime. Others have focused on gender roles and racial issues. The majority's opinion is that it is a Masonic opera.

The opinion that *Die Zauberflöte* is purely a Masonic opera has been challenged by some. The opera's Masonic or Rosicrucian elements have been, for the most part, limited to the uncovering of number symbolism (the number three) in the use of harmony, key signature, and rhythm (three chords). Masonic symbolism is also said to be portrayed in counterpoint and instrumentation. Peter Branscombe discounts this line of analysis:

The subject [of Masonic symbolism] has been examined most thoroughly by J. Chailley in *The Magic Flute, Masonic Opera* (English translation London, 1972) and by Katharine Thompson in *The Masonic Thread in Mozart* (London, 1977). Professor Chailley believes that almost every melody, rhythm, key harmony and detail of orchestration in *Die Zauberflöte* has its place in an immense system of Masonic symbolism. Though the beliefs and sentiments of the Freemasons were increasingly present in Mozart's mind, in a way which could not but affect his music, it goes against what we know about Mozart from the rest of his music to believe that his musical invention began to be based on forces other than purely musical or dramatic ones, in the way Schumann used cryptograms.²

¹ In 1789 France was in the throes of the French revolution. In America, the Declaration of Independence of 1776 acknowledged the inalienable right to freedom of all human beings. In 1798 Louis Alexandre Berthier invaded the Vatican and took Pius VI captive, stripping the papacy of political power and thus opening the door for previously forbidden religious influences.

² Peter Branscombe, *W.A. Mozart Die Zauberflöte, Cambridge Opera Handbooks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 138.

David Buch also debunks this opinion. He sees *Die Zauberflöte* as one of many works of a period which exhibits exotic imagery and uses common themes found in the fairytale literature of its day. These works, he claims, have no relation to Freemasonry.³

Another opinion is that the opera is puzzling. Maynard Solomon presents this analysis:

Sarastro, a demonic kidnapper, is transformed into a fountainhead of benevolence; the Queen of the Night, a mother passionately seeking to recover her daughter, turns into the embodiment of malevolence; Papageno and Tamino become disciples of Sarastro, though both were initially in the service of the Queen of the Night; Monostatos too changes his allegiance, but in the other direction; Pamina, despite having been abducted by Sarastro and almost raped while in his charge, confesses her own criminality and to all appearances freely converts to the interests of her jailers. *Die Zauberflöte* is a rescue opera in which the hero arrives on the scene himself crying for help, trembling in fear, and fainting dead away. “Help! Help! Or else I am lost! . . . Ah, save me” – this is a strange text for a chivalric hero. He has a bow but no arrows, yet despite his defenselessness he is chosen as the perfect knight, now armed with only a magic flute, to rescue Pamina. It is not Prince Tamino but the timorous bird catcher Papageno who twice saves Pamina from rape; and it is Papageno not Tamino who sings the great love duet with her, “Bei Männern, welche Liebefühlen.” An old crone says her age is eighteen years and two minutes; she turns out to be Papagena. The unpreparedness of these reversals, improbabilities, unmaskings, and remaskings is what is so startling, like turning over a card, switching a lamp on and off, changing light into darkness and back again. Appropriately, the overarching design of the opera embodies the transition from star-flaming night to brilliant sun.⁴

At one time or another all the characters in the opera undergo seemingly unpredictable transitions from light to darkness, or from darkness to light, turning everything in its contained universe completely upside-down.

Jessica Waldoff’s *The Music of Recognition: Operatic Enlightenment in The Magic Flute*, credits these confusing shifts to the Aristotelian concept of “recognition.” Waldoff’s study describes “recognition” as “*anagnorisis*, as Aristotle terms it – is the shift from ignorance to

³ For an in-depth look at the female characters in Mozart’s operas see Kristi Brown-Montesano, *Understanding the Women of Mozart’s Operas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), and Judith A. Eckelmeyer, *The Cultural Context of Mozart’s ‘Magic Flute’* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991). For racial issues see Malcom S. Cole, “Monostatos and His ‘Sister’: Racial Stereotype in *Die Zauberflöte* and Its Sequel,” *The Opera Quarterly* 21 (2005): 2-26. See David J. Buch, “Fairy-Tale Literature and *Die Zauberflöte*,” *Acta Musicologica* 64 (1992): 30-49.

⁴ Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 506-507.

knowledge, and involves the protagonist (and the audience) in a powerful reversal of former understanding.”⁵

Waldoff indicates that enlightenment is a state of new awareness. A new awareness entails the acquisition of new knowledge, new wisdom. This creates a new understanding of the principal characters.

As *Die Zauberflöte* assumes the task of imparting wisdom, we are led to ask: What wisdom or knowledge do we learn from this work? Where did its wisdom come from? Does the opera portray a clash between light and darkness? Or does it promote a system that contains both light and darkness? This study will look at the opera from the latter perspective. In order to understand it, we must turn to an old concept dating back to Pythagoras.

Pythagoras ascribed divine order to the number one, which he called a “Monad.” He attributed the Monad to the Olympian Gods, who were perceived to be the creator Gods. The Monad represented stability, for it could not be divided. Pythagoras also believed that the number two, the Dyad, was the reason for all chaos, for it contained a contradicting duality. He linked this number to the fall of man. Bepin Behari, a leading Vedic theosophical astrologer, explains:

The astrological classification of the sign as “even” does not make much sense with many astrologers. But the occultists attach considerable importance to this classification. The “odd” signs are reckoned as divine and the “even” ones as terrestrial, devilish and unlucky. Only “one” is good and harmonious because no disharmony can proceed from “one.” The “even” or binary numbers are different. The Pythagoreans hated binary. With them it was the origin of differentiation, hence of contrast, discord, or matter, the beginning of evil...With the Pythagoreans, the Duad was that imperfect state into which the first manifested being fell when it got detached from the Monad. It was the point from which the two roads--the good and the evil--bifurcated. All that was double-faced or false was called binary by them.⁶

⁵ Jessica Waldoff, *Recognition in Mozart Operas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 3.

⁶ Bepin Behari, *Esoteric Principles of Vedic Astrology: A Treatise on Advanced Predictive Techniques* (New Delhi: Sterling publishers Ltd., 2003), 266.

The Monad and Dyad concepts are also present in the Masonic writings. The following quote, taken from Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, provides further clarification:

The unit is the symbol of identity, equality, existence, conservation, and general harmony; the Central Fire, the point within the Circle. Two, or the duad, is the symbol of diversity, inequality, division, separation, and vicissitudes. The duad is the origin of contrasts. It is the imperfect condition into which, according to the Pythagoreans, a being falls, when he detaches himself from the Monad, or God ... As formerly the number ONE designated harmony, order, or the Good Principle (the ONE and ONLY GOD, expressed in Latin by Solus, when the words Sol, Soleil, symbol of this God) the number Two expressed the contrary idea. There commenced the fatal knowledge of good and evil.⁷

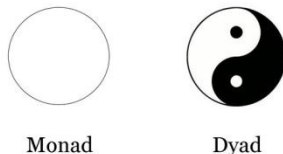
Plutarch offers a third confirmation:

The Pythagoreans use a great number of terms as attributes of these two principles; of the good, they use the unit, the terminate, the permanent, the straight, the odd, the square, the equal, the dexter, and the lucid; and again of the bad, the two, the interminate, the fluent, the crooked, the even, the oblong, the unequal, the sinister, and the dark; insomuch that all these are looked upon as principles of generation. But Anaxagoras made but two, the intelligence and the interminate; and Aristotle called the first of these form, and the latter privation. But Plato in many places, as it were shading and veiling over his opinion, names the first of these opposite principles the Same, and the second the Other. But in his book of Laws, when he was now grown old, he affirmed, not in riddles and emblems but in plain and proper words, that the world is not moved by one soul, but perhaps by a great many, but not by fewer than two; the one of which is beneficent, and the other contrary to it and the author of things contrary.”⁸

⁷ Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (N.P.: Forgotten Books, 2008), 530. Born at the beginning of the 19th century, Albert Pike, an American, became a leading Freemason. He spearheaded the Illuminati in America, an organization which Adam Weishaupt, one of Mozart's Masonic contemporaries and a close friend, had initiated in Vienna. The Illuminati, or the enlightened ones, drew their membership from the highest Masonic degrees, and became the 33rd degree of Freemasonry. Pike was a prolific writer of poems, philosophy and handbooks for the order, with such titles as *The Point Within the Circle: Freemasonry Veiled in Allegory and Illustrated by Symbols*, *The Porch and the Middle Chamber: Book of the Lodge Prose Sketches & Poems Written in the Western Country*, *Pythagoras and Hermes, Rituals of Old Degrees*. In 1871, one hundred and twenty years after Mozart's death, Pike published *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, a 861-page handbook containing lectures on the roots of Freemasonry, in particular the 23-degree Scottish Rite. “Until 1964 this book was given to every Mason completing the 14th degree in the Southern jurisdiction of the US Scottish Rite Freemason. Masonic lectures are standard oral presentations given during initiation to a new degree. Lectures provide background material for initiates and they discuss duties of the degree in general terms. They do not present details of the rituals, gestures, regalia, etc., for which one must consult other books on Masonry.” Taken from the Publisher's preface to Albert Pike, *Morals and dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (n.p.:Forgotten Books, 2008), vii.

⁸ William Watson Goodwin, *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 4 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874), 109.

This thesis takes the position that *Die Zauberflöte* is not a work that pits light against darkness, but one that promotes a system which contains both light and darkness, a model that functions by the employment of two opposing forces. The following figures represent the two principles:



In the Dyad, good and evil work together, even though they appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum. This explains why all the characters in *Die Zauberflöte* undergo seemingly unpredictable transitions from light to darkness or from darkness to light, effortlessly crossing between the opposing planes of good and evil.

Furthermore, this is a system of morality that includes a mechanism of rewards and punishments as correctives guidelines for human behavior. When viewed through this lens, the opera's claim of enlightenment differs widely from the commonly perceived view, and its claim of wisdom, knowledge, and enlightenment, refers only to this self-contained system.

Die Zauberflöte's central theme of duality portrays an ancient and universal motif of ideas and principles. Duality can be found in the ancient writings of the Babylonians, Mesopotamians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Zoroastrians and Hebrews, as well as in the writings of the age of Enlightenment.

Jessica Waldoff also portrays *Die Zauberflöte's* overarching theme as that of enlightenment. She reiterates the position that the purpose of enlightenment is to impart wisdom. However, she takes the commonly accepted stance that the opera is a play of light versus darkness, of good versus evil. Waldoff suggests that the direction in which *Die Zauberflöte* is best understood is

through the multiple layers of information available in “linguistic, figurative and historical” contexts:

The theme of enlightenment in Mozart's opera is infused with multiple meanings, all of which are inherent in the etymology of the word and the metaphor it employs. To enlighten is to impart light or wisdom; and enlightenment is a state of new awareness brought about by this figurative illumination. The appellations given to the age in different languages - the Enlightenment, Le siècle des lumières, Die Aufklärung- are all derived from the same metaphor, in which light is knowledge. The Latin nouns *lux* and *lumen*, meaning “light,” influence the English and French terms, and the adjective *clarus*, meaning “clear” or “bright,” the German. (In French the connection of light and knowledge is especially apparent: “avoir des lumières de” means “to have knowledge of”). The connotations and implications in all three languages point towards the ideologies of the age. But it is no longer appropriate to take a one-sided view of a period so diverse in such ideologies; far better is a multiple view in which the Enlightenment comprises diverse movements, the goals of which are both complementary and contradictory. Consequently, “enlightenment” resonates within a rich network of linguistic, figurative and historical meanings.⁹

Although Waldoff's perception of light and darkness carries her on a completely different line of research than this study, her declaration that “enlightenment resonates within a rich network of linguistic, figurative and historical meanings” suggests three ways of unlocking the knowledge woven into the story of *Die Zauberflöte*. This thesis shall pursue all three to some degree.

Ultimately, *Die Zauberflöte*'s portrayal of light, darkness, and enlightenment refers to the ancient Mysteries of Egypt, and its foundational concepts have no real meaning to the uninitiated in mystical knowledge. The average listener might appreciate its music and its colorful fairytale plot, but its deeper meaning will not be perceived or clearly understood unless the mystical realm is explored. This was a cause of frustration for Mozart, and he voiced as much in a letter to Constanze, postmarked “Vienna, 8-9 October 1791”:

After lunch I went home at once and composed again until it was time to go to the opera. Leutgeb begged me to take him a second time and I did so. I am taking Mamma tomorrow. Hofer has already given her the libretto to read. In her case what will probably happen will be that she will *see* the opera, but not *hear it*.

⁹ Waldoff, *Recognition*, 17.

The.... (A name has been deleted) had a box this evening....(Part of a line has been deleted) applauded *everything* most heartily. But he, the know-all, showed himself to be such a thorough *Bavarian* that I could not remain or I should have had to call him an ass. Unfortunately I was there just when the second act began, that is, at the solemn scene. He made fun of everything. At first I was patient enough to draw his attention to a few passages. But he laughed at everything. Well, I could stand it no longer. I called him a Papageno and cleared out. But I don't think that the idiot understood my remark. So I went into another box where *Flamm* [Franz Xavier Flamm was a clerk of Chancery to the Vienna Magistrat in 1785. His daughter Manonie afterwards became a famous singer] and his wife happened to be. There everything was very pleasant and I stayed to the end.¹⁰

Mozart distinguishes between those who merely *attend* from those that *understand* the opera's true message, and his impatience with the clueless "Bavarian" is obvious. It is the purpose of this thesis to elucidate the esoteric contents of *Die Zauberflöte* and by doing so, to facilitate an intelligent understanding of its contents.

One would assume that the moral law of contrary forces may be pieced together (via linguistic, figurative and historical meanings) through an exploration of the literary materials that served as inspiration for Mozart and Schikaneder, the librettist. Christoph Martin Wieland's (1733-1813) collection of fairytales entitled *Dschinnistan*, Ignaz von Born's article *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, and Jean Terrasson's *The Life of Sethos* are the main sources in this category. This study shall also explore literary and philosophical trends manifested by Mozart's contemporary poets and philosophers to ascertain whether these issues are paralleled in their works.

All quotes from the libretto are taken from Michael Freyhan's *The Authentic Magic Flute Libretto*, (Lanhma: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009) and follow his formatting. The left column contains the text taken from the First Edition, Simrock, Bonn, 1814, and the right column contains the original text from Mozart's autograph.

¹⁰ Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 969.

INFLUENCES BEHIND THE LIBRETTO

THE OCCULT AND FAIRYTALE LITERATURE

David Buch contests that *Die Zauberflöte* was a medium for purely Masonic symbolism. He argues that the primary influence in Mozart's opera is "ancient occult practice and not specifically Freemasonry."¹¹ Buch asserts that most of the occult elements in *Die Zauberflöte* were also present in other operas produced by Schikaneder. Some of these were written prior to 1791 and some after, and they, including *Die Zauberflöte*, were based on *Dschinnistan*:

The most important literary sources for *Die Zauberflöte* were the *Dschinnistan* stories by Wieland, Einsedel, and Liebeskind, which provided the basic fairy-tale material for several Schikaneder productions, both before and after *Die Zauberflöte*. Liebeskind's "*Lulu, oder Die Zauberflöte*" supplied only some of these motives, while other stories contain additional material, particularly Wieland's "*Der Stein*," "*Nadir und Nadine*," "*Timander und Melissa*," "*Der Druiden*," "*Adis und Dahy*," and Einsiedel's "*Die klugen Knaben*." Egon Komorzynski has demonstrated the close relationship of *Die Zauberflöte* to Wieland's collection as a whole, identifying motifs borrowed from other stories in the collection, as well as from the Wieland's "*Oberon*."¹²

The occult elements that appear in these tales were also originally associated with ancient occult practice rather than with Freemasonry. Some of the more obvious ingredients in Wieland's tales are trials by fire, the exclusion of women, and the trials of silence and virtue:

Some elements that modern writers often designate as Masonic in *Die Zauberflöte* appear in these fairy tales without such meaning. A trial of fire and water is mentioned in "*Der Stein der Weisen*," one of Wieland's fairy tales in *Dschinnistan* that contains several Egyptian references (there is little or no relationship to Schikaneder's opera of the same name). Also depicted here is an exclusively male ritual. In "*Der Druid*" an enlightened group of older males instruct a headstrong youth. Egyptian symbols also appear in this story. In "*Der Palast der Wahrheit*" the hero is warned against "women's falsehood." In "*Der Zweikampf*" the hero is required to make a vow to renounce associating with women. This is the same misogynistic tone that we find in *Die Zauberflöte*: it is more consistent with the exotic orientalism than with Freemasonry. "Trials of

¹¹ David J. Buch, "*Die Zauberflöte*, Masonic Opera, and Other Fairy Tales," *Acta Musicologica* 2 (2004): 208.

¹² David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-century Musical Theater* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 333-334.

silence,” a common motif in fairy tales, were a familiar plot device on the stage, as demonstrated by the many Orpheus operas...The point here is evoking ancient occult practice and not specifically Freemasonry.¹³

Christoph Martin Wieland's *Dschinnistan oder auserlesene Feen-und Geister-Märchen, theils neu erfunden, theils neu übersetzt und umgearbeitet* (*Dschinnistan or selected tales of fairies and spirits, partly newly invented, partly newly translated and revised*) (1786-9), contained 19 stories, some original and some translated and adapted from *Cabinet des Fées*, a French counterpart containing stories by Pajon, Petis de la Croix, and Madame de Lutot. “The word Dschinnistan is obviously Wieland's own creation, intended to mean ‘Land of the Jinn,’” states the *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*.¹⁴ The “Land of Jinn” becomes meaningful when we understand what the word “Jinn” means:

In Arabian and Muslim folklore jinns are ugly and evil demons having supernatural powers which they can bestow on persons having powers to call them up. In the Western world they are called genies ... In Islam, jinns are fiery spirits (Qur'an 15:27) particularly associated with the desert ... The highest of the jinns is Iblis, formerly called Azazel, the prince of darkness, or the Devil. The jinns were thought by some to be spirits that are lower than angels because they are made of fire and are not immortal. They can take on human and animal shapes to influence men to do good or evil. They are quick to punish those indebted to them who do not follow their many rules. In the "Arabian Nights" jinns or genies came from Aladdin's Lamp. ... There are several myths concerning the home of the jinns. According to Persian mythology some of them live in a place called Jinnistan. Others say jinns live with other supernatural beings in the Kaf, mystical emerald mountains surrounding the earth.¹⁵

This description aligns the contents of *Dschinnistan* with the occult, which is defined as “supernatural, mystical, or magical beliefs, practices, or phenomena.”¹⁶ The tales in *Dschinnistan* contained “magic objects, magic elixirs, secret books, jinn, sultans, labyrinths,

¹³ Buch, “Die Zauberflöte, Masonic Opera, and Other Fairy Tales,” *Acta Musicologica* 2 (2004): 208.

¹⁴ Ulrich Marzolph et al., *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc, 2004), 737.

¹⁵ "Jinn." *Encyclopedia Mythica* from Encyclopedia Mythica Online.

<<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/j/jinn.html>>

[Accessed February 20, 2012].

¹⁶ "occult". Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press.

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/occult> [Accessed March 11, 2012].

Oriental palaces, subterranean crypts, and mystical and alchemist symbols.” *Nadir and Nadine*, for instance, involved a magician (Sarastro is also addressed as a magician in *Die Zauberflöte*), various objects of magic (magic ring, magic sword, a magic bird), as well as a reversal of reality like the one in *Die Zauberflöte*.¹⁷ And alchemy, the black art of magic, can be traced to Egypt’s mystical Isis and Osiris, the gods Sarastro prays to in *Die Zauberflöte*.

After his appointment as director of Theatre auf der Wieden in 1789, Schikaneder produced a series of successful *singspiels* based on Wieland’s genii stories. His first full-scale fairytale singspiel was the production of *Der Stein der Weisen oder die Zauberinsel* (*The Philosopher’s Stone or the Enchanted Island*) which premiered on September 11th, 1790, one year before *Die Zauberflöte*’s premiere. Also taken from *Dschinnistan*, *Der Stein der Weisen* is a heroic-comic opera, in which good wins over evil, with music by Paul Wranitzky.¹⁸ The most obvious parallels to *Die Zauberflöte* are the double couples, one heroic, the other rustic: Nadir and Nadine and Lubano and Lubanara, (Tamino/Pamina, and Papageno/Papagena), a flying machine, a magic object (here a bird), subterranean vaults where only men are allowed, a temple, and a final wedding of the heroic couple.

According to David Buch, the structure of *Der Stein der Weisen* served as a direct model for *Die Zauberflöte*:

Both operas have a similar two-act structure with an introduction, large-scale episodic finales, and similar arias and ensembles. Both present a ‘romantic’ mixture of solemn, comic, magic, and love scenes. Both have musical segments for the working of the mechanical stage and for magic episodes. Both operas have an aria for Schikaneder’s comic character after the introduction and shortly before the act 2 finale. Both operas have male choruses late in act 2, as well as an aria for Anna Gottlieb’s despairing characters (Nadine and Pamina). As for the musical similarities between *Der Stein der Weisen* and *Die Zauberflöte*, one finds traditional supernatural devices in both operas, for example, enchanted march music, magical wind ensembles, and the use of descending octave leaps for magic invocations.¹⁹

¹⁷ Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests*, 296.

¹⁸ David J. Buch, ed., *Der Stein der Weisen* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2007), X.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, iii.

The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales states that the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* was “principally based upon a fairy tale by [Wieland’s son-in-law] A.J. Liebeskind (originally, *Lulu, oder Die Zauberflöte*) in Wieland’s collection (1786).”²⁰

The parallels between *Die Zauberflöte* and *Lulu oder Die Zauberflöte* are clear. A virtuous young hero is given the task of saving an imprisoned young maiden from the clutches of an evil sorcerer. He is given a magic flute and the promise of a reward. The story even ends with a final punishment similar to the one inflicted upon the Queen of the Night and her cohorts in *Die Zauberflöte* as well as the marriage of the young lovers in the final scene.

It was from *Lulu* that Schikaneder extracted the Queen of the Night and the magic flute, although as Buch documents, “these elements have numerous precedents in German opera.”²¹ Present also in all these tales is the element of the punishment of vice, and the elevation of virtue through the moral law of contrary forces, the central focus of this thesis.

Another opera based on *Lulu, oder Die Zauberflöte* which was very successful in Vienna shortly before the first production of *Die Zauberflöte*, was *Kaspar der Fagottist, oder Die Zauberzither*. It was written by the librettist Joachim Perinet with music by Wenzel Müller. Mozart writes disparagingly of it to his wife: “To cheer myself up I then went to the Kasperle Theatre to see the new opera ‘Der Fagottist,’ which is making such a sensation, but which is shoddy stuff.”²² Like *Die Zauberflöte*, this story contains supernatural beings (a fairy), a powerful figure who holds a young maiden against her will, a flying machine (hot air balloon) magical music and a magical musical instrument. The work ends with a double wedding (the reward of virtue) and the punishment of the evil characters, just as in *Die Zauberflöte*.

The tales in *Dschinnistan* focus on supernatural occurrences and supernatural beings such as genii and the Devil, albeit camouflaged under symbolic characters and magical objects. The

²⁰ Jack Zipes, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 327.

²¹ Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests*, 335.

²² Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, 954.

most salient characteristic of these supernatural beings is that they reward virtuous people while at the same time punishing those perceived as evil. Thus, these tales were intrinsically woven with the thread of a morality that stressed the elevation of virtue over vice and the accompanying concepts of reward and punishment.

In *Der Stein der Weisen*, for instance, the Genie announces to a group of maidens that the purest of all shall receive a beautiful caged bird as a reward. As they begin to quarrel about who is the most virtuous and pure, he commands: “Silence! Such contention should be avoided. Sadik will decide in this manner: the bird will sing when the purest one receives it, and this is the only one who deserves it... to devote yourselves to virtue, this should be your constant striving.”²³

The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia states that the *Dschinnistan* fairytales “are written in various genres, including the moral tale, the allegory, satire, the metaphysical tale, and the riddle. Some of the stories can easily be related to the Arabian Nights.”²⁴ Jane Brown, in *The Persistence of Allegory*, pinpoints *Die Zauberflöte* as belonging to the first genre, that of a moral allegory, in which the Queen and her forces are punished for attempting to destroy the alleged forces of love and virtue, thus re-enacting the age-old moral battle between good and evil: “This is the final dispersal of the Queen and her forces... This moral allegory, a late and secularized descendent of European morality drama, is the traditional, underlying allegory in the opera. All readings of it as Masonic or political allegory are essentially even more secularized embroidery on this basic structure.”²⁵

A synthesis of these multi-faceted sources evolves from these various perspectives: one in which the opera emerges as a morality-tale with roots in ancient mysticism. Furthermore, its brand of morality is deeply rooted in supernatural forces from the so-called “abyss”: jinn, genii,

²³ Buch, *Der Stein der Weisen*, xxix.

²⁴ Marzolph, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 737.

²⁵ Jane K. Brown, *The persistence of Allegory: Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 195.

beings from the spirit world. The literature is rife with descriptions of good genii and evil genii whose roles are to either reward or punish the human characters, a behavior which exhibits the same moral principle present in the mythology of ancient Egyptian occult.

EGYPTIAN OCCULT

Egyptologist Erik Hornung states that “the opera brought Masonic concerns onto the stage in Egyptian dress, down to the Mysteries of Isis and initiation inside a pyramid (so say the stage directions).”²⁶ A research of the literature supports the opinion that ancient occult practice, in the context of *Die Zauberflöte*, relates in particular to rites of initiation into Egyptian priestly orders.

In the opera, Isis and Osiris are the Egyptian gods in whose temple Sarastro lives and rules, and Tamino undergoes purification trials and marries Pamina. The Temple of Wisdom is populated by a brotherhood of priests modeled after the priesthood of ancient Egypt. Sarastro prays to Isis and Osiris asking for wisdom and blessings for the newlywed couple. The story of Isis and Osiris should provide, therefore, the foundational backdrop for the opera, as well as its overriding central message.

There is documented evidence that *Die Zauberflöte* was referred to by some of Mozart’s contemporaries as “the Egyptian Mysteries.” In a letter from the tenor Johann Jakob Haibel to the Mannheim Theater director Baron W.H. von Dalberg, he writes: “Concerning the *Egyptische Geheimnisse*, which is known here as *Die Zauberflöte*, I must respectfully report that I have not yet been able to obtain the opera inasmuch as Herr Mozart has died and during his lifetime he asked 100 ducats for the score. In the meantime I will send Your Excellency the libretto.”²⁷

²⁶ Erik Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 125.

²⁷ Cliff Eisen, *New Mozart Document: A Supplement to O.E. Deutsch’s Documentary Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 73.

Only those who care to delve into the heart of the Mysteries of ancient Egypt can truly grasp the underlying message of *Die Zauberflöte*, for it is well camouflaged, and resides in an implied subtext. According to Buch, Ludwig Batzko, an East-Prussian historian and writer, was of the same opinion. Batzko expressed this view in “Allegorie aus der Zauberflöte” (1794), saying that the work “obliquely allude[s] to the ceremonies of certain orders; even the uninitiated will know this, provided they are acquainted with Mysteries of the ancient culture.”²⁸

Furthermore, the Age of Enlightenment was thoroughly fascinated by the exotic mysticism of the orient. Maynard Solomon describes Mozart’s own fascination in this regard:

Then there was his attachment to secret societies and orders – to the imaginary “Kingdom of Back” of his childhood, to the Masonic lodges, and to “The Grotto,” about which his wife reported so recently after his death. Mozart’s attraction to a Zoroastrian orientalism in the tradition of the Masonic lodges and reading societies, which were hotbeds of interest in the exotic, the oriental, and the miraculous. (Zoroaster may be later reincarnated as Sarastro in Mozart’s mythic-Masonic opera, *Die Zauberflöte*.)²⁹

According to Hornung, all schools of thought that might stand under the umbrella of oriental exoticism can eventually be traced back to Egypt. He states that, “every period of history has had an Egypt of its own ... Diodorus’ esteem of Osiris had its effect on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when Isis and Osiris were regarded as the figures who imparted culture to humankind. Osiris was also connected with alchemy, which had claimed an origin in Egypt since antiquity, and which in fact displayed astonishing parallels to the myth of Osiris.”³⁰

Regarding Egypt’s influence on European life, Hornung believes that Egypt “had an astonishing influence on the intellectual life of Europe. As theological debates and bloody religious wars intensified in the wake of the Reformation and Counterreformation, there was an intensified longing for the tolerance and reconciliation embodied by Hermes as a god of moderation. For Giordano Bruno, original divine wisdom was not mirrored by the corrupted

²⁸ From the *Journal des Luxus und der Maden*, 9, Weimar (19 April, 1794): 371, quoted in David Buch, “Die Zauberflöte, Masonic Opera, and Other Fairy Tales,” *Acta Musicologica* 76 (2004): 201.

²⁹ Solomon, *Mozart – A Life*, 344.

³⁰ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 191.

Christianity of his own day but rather by the religion of the ‘all-knowing Egyptian Mercury,’ that is, Hermes Trismegistus.”³¹

Hornung notes that some eighteenth-century writers viewed Egypt as a reference point, using it as a model for state and religious institutions:

Ancient Egypt was also significant to the eighteenth century as a political alternative, a model of peace, material well-being, just and wise laws, and cultural flowering. Since there were as yet no new sources, writers continued to rely on the accounts from classical antiquity; depending on their respective viewpoints, they viewed Egypt positively as a model of a strong, enlightened monarchy or negatively as an example of oppression and priestly rule. The notion of the Egyptian priesthood as a sort of Catholic clergy began in this period and was long held, though at the same time, Ignaz Von Born took the priests of Egypt to be the ideal, original Freemasons. Notwithstanding many negative voices, the feeling prevailed that if there were ever a Golden Age, it had been in ancient Egypt.³²

These writers delved deeply into the ancient writings of classical antiquity in order to acquire this ancient knowledge, or “wisdom.” Among these, and the most important for the study of *Die Zauberflöte*, was Ignaz von Born, the author of the essay *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*.

ÜBER DIE MYSTERIEN DER AEGYPTIER

The year Mozart became a Freemason (1784) was the same year that von Born’s essay was published in the first issue of the Viennese Masonic magazine, *Journal für Freymaurer*.

Branscombe states that Born’s essay was the most “outspokenly Masonic source” for the opera, and that *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* was “the product of a man close to Mozart.”³³

Branscombe makes several associations between essay and libretto: “that Schikaneder had a copy of Born’s essay before him, or was at least recalling details of its phraseology, is suggested by the verbal echoes...” – and he goes on to enumerate them.³⁴ Born’s essay provides much light on not only the symbolism of the opera, but on its main message.

³¹ Ibid., 192.

³² Ibid., 192.

³³ Branscombe, *Die Zauberflöte* 20.

³⁴ Ibid., 21

In the article, von Born affirms that Freemasons keep strict adherence to ceremonies and customs, as did the ancient orders of Egypt: “Our laws do not permit us under any circumstances to change anything in our works. We too [like the Egyptians] make sure that there is unity in our ceremonies and customs, and that nothing is changed. Our eagerness to do this may even grow under persecution.”³⁵ Since Freemasonry maintains such a strict adherence to ceremonies and customs, one assumes that their teaching also would remain unaltered across place and time. In that light, later Masonic works shall also be referenced, such as the Albert G. Mackey’s *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (1914-1916) and Albert Pike’s *Morals and Dogma* (1871).

A leading scientist in the fields of mineralogy and metallurgy, von Born was an active Freemason, and had a prominent role in the “rationalist wing of the Freemasons.”³⁶ He was Grand Master of the True Concord Lodge and Grand Secretary of the Vienna Lodges. Mozart, who considered him a close friend, wrote the cantata *Die Maurerfreude* (The Mason’s Joy) in his honor in 1785, one year after his own induction into the order.

Von Born’s article is divided into four sections: 1. Introduction, 2. Overview of the condition of the Egyptian peoples in the oldest times, 3. Constitution, duties and knowledge of the Egyptian priests, 4. The comparison of ceremonies and customs between the Egyptians and the Freemasons. His narrative begins with a description of how Egyptians evolved from a hunter-gatherer society into an agricultural one, and how in the process of this evolution Egypt was transformed into a highly organized and tightly controlled society. He describes Egypt’s totalitarian regime as being under the rule of the priesthood. The priesthood itself was under the control of the deities, with whom they came into direct contact in the most secretive of all rituals, The Mysteries. The Egyptian priests were the receptacles for the wisdom of the gods, and

³⁵ Ignaz von Born, “Über die Mysterien der Egypter,” *Journal Für Freymauer*, 1 (1784): 114. http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN246075619_1_1/118/

³⁶ Solomon, *Mozart – A Life*, 311.

it was through them that the gods imparted their laws, which were based on a reward and punishment morality system.

Von Born collected information about Egypt and the Egyptian Mysteries from several accounts. He used such sources as Plutarch, Herodotus, Diodorus, and Jamblicus. In the article he states, “everything that pertained to the Mysteries had a threefold purpose: moral, historical and mystic.”³⁷ The first and last of these are of particular interest in this study, for they provide an understanding of The Mysteries upon which *Die Zauberflöte* was built. Hermetic knowledge, a major component of Egyptian wisdom, pointed to the sun and moon (Osiris and Isis/Sarastro and the Queen of the Night) as being symbolic of the two elements embodied in one godhead: the passive principle (good), symbolized by water, and the active principle (evil), which is symbolized by fire. The opera’s specific message of wisdom pertains to the two contrary elements contained in one moral law.

A perusal of *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* leaves no doubt that this article was a major source of philosophical inspiration for *Die Zauberflöte*. While Wieland’s tales provided an outer shell for the story, clothing it in the allegorical fairy-tale language of Mozart’s day, ancient Egypt supplied a much more serious structure which served as a vessel for the moral law of contrary forces. The theme of gods doling out punishment as a solution for curbing evil arises from the very beginning of von Born’s depiction of how Egypt evolved from a wild land to a civilized nation:

Egyptians looked at the different animals that incubated in the remaining swampy waters and in the mud of the Nile. When they did not see the animals hatching, they thought the mud did it. When the eggs broke open, they considered them births of the river Nile’s and they assumed that their own parents also had been children of the mud and morass of the river. They could feel how weak they were as compared to these animals, and so they believed that the gods had hidden themselves within these powerful animals in order to punish the peoples for their vices and their crimes. The crocodile and the wolf became

³⁷ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 85.

revered as well as the animals which sought after the crocodile and the wolf, and who devoured them. These observations and these beliefs they arrived at contributed to their first comprehension of evil minded and good minded gods, and the assumption that there was a wandering of souls.³⁸

Some musicologists have claimed that von Born was the supposed inspiration for the character of Sarastro in the opera; a close study of the opera does not substantiate that claim, however. Sarastro is modeled after an Egyptian magician/high priest, possibly Sesostres who is mentioned in *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, and his role is to ensure that order exists through the implementation of rewards and punishments. Sarastro's name and principles could also link him with Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, "the traditional founder and prophet of Zoroastrianism, the dualist religion of ancient Persia based upon the struggles between the good and evil principles represented by Ahura Mazda and Ahriman."³⁹ Like the Egyptians, Zoroastrians believed fire was a purifying agent, and they used it in purification rituals.

THE LIFE OF SETHOS

Abbé Jean Terrasson's *The Life of Sethos* (1731) has been described as "a combination of political instruction, a guide to Egyptian antiquity, and a novel of Masonic initiation."⁴⁰ Branscombe says that there are "numerous similarities between Terrasson's novel and Schikaneder's libretto."⁴¹ The book's cover states, under the title: "Taken from Private Memoirs of the Ancient Egyptians/Translated from a Greek Manuscript into French/And now faithfully done into English from the Paris edition; By Mr. Lediard." The preface claims that the original author of the Greek manuscript is "no where named. But we find by several passages in this

³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³⁹ Zarathustra. Encyclopedia Mythica. Retrieved June 05, 2012, from Encyclopedia Mythica Online. <<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/z/zarathustra.html>>

⁴⁰ Peter France "Terrasson, Jean, Abbé" *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*. Peter France. Oxford University Press 1995. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. University of Washington. 21 February 2012 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t188.e4505>>

⁴¹ Branscombe, *Die Zauberflöte*, 11.

work, that he was a Greek born, and lived at Alexandria, under the reign of Marcus Aurelius.”⁴² Branscombe, however, states that “it soon became accepted that Abbé Jean Terrasson is the anonymous author of this three-volume novel rather than the translator of a putative Greek original.”⁴³ The Preface also affirms that the novel “contains a more refined and profound moral than has hitherto been seen in any book.”⁴⁴ Buch also states that Terrason “delighted in the replacement of the mythological gods with the fairies and genies of the ‘moderns.’”⁴⁵

Terrasson unequivocally categorizes *Sethos* as a fictional, rather than historical, work. To him that distinction is important:

History falls far short of fiction, when the latter is employed in such a manner as becomes every prudent writer; that is, with an Eye to form the manner of men. History, in itself, is but a collection of facts, guided by providence, for ends generally unknown to us: and tho’ every thing be wonderfully well ordered, pursuant to the mysterious views of the divine wisdom and justice; the consequences of men’s actions are frequently to our eyes but a series of disappointed projects and crimes unpunished...In a word, mere history is rather an object than a doctrine...But in a fictitious work the case is very different. The moral Author, if his undertaking be narrative, generally makes it his business to represent his hero adorned with all the virtues proper to his state and condition. He places him in all such circumstances as may give him room to exercise these virtues... My author...displays a complete life, or the actual application of those principles and sentiments. Sethos is not virtuous by a natural disposition or from a habit. The motives of his conduct are drawn from durable and enlightened principles, which he displays in different encounters ... we have reason to suppose, that, our author, who liv’d in the second century, had some knowledge of morals far superior to those of paganism. From these morals, it is very plain he borrows those adequate definitions of the virtues and vices, which he sometimes puts into the mouth of his hero... And upon this it is I build the confidence I have in affirming, that this work contains a more refined and profound moral than has hitherto been seen in any book, the product of mere literature ... As our author, however, leaves his hero a pagan, he confines himself, in this history of life, wholly to moral virtues; and the recommendation of such to the practice of mankind is not without its advantage ... Another of our author’s view has been to lay hold of the opportunity of an Egyptian hero to throw into his work a great number of learned curiosities, concerning that once famous people.⁴⁶

⁴² Jean Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos: Taken from Private Memoirs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. 1 (London: J. Walthoe, 1732), i. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. University of Washington. 21 Feb. 2012 <http://find.galegroup.com/offcampus.lib.washington.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroup=oupName=wash_main&tabID=Too1&docId=CW3304038565&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>.

⁴³ Branscombe, *Die Zauberflöte*, 10.

⁴⁴ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, iii.

⁴⁵ Buch, *Magic Flutes & Enchanted Forests*, 44.

⁴⁶ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, ii-x.

Both Von Born's *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* and Terrasson's *Sethos* lead us into Egypt's wisdom as expressed in its moral laws. Both claim that attaining wisdom and light is their general purpose. *Die Zauberflöte*'s purpose falls along the same lines.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT, GOOD AND EVIL, AND THE GOLDEN AGE

“Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields – like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main – why should they be a history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?”
William Wordsworth, The Recluse

“Where there is the tree of knowledge, there is always Paradise;’
so say the most ancient and the most modern of serpents”
Nietzsche.

The story of paradise, mankind’s creation and fall, and good and evil are themes which have historically inspired human artistic expression, standing as evidence that this story is deeply rooted in the human psyche. Some of the greatest masterpieces of human ingenuity are reflections of these themes.

Ancient philosophers pondered on these subjects, as is evident by their writings. Plato, for instance, conceptualized God (he made a distinction between God, gods and demigods/ demiurges) as unchangeable and good, and never the cause of evil. The immutability of God was taught by Xenophanes, the Eleatics, and by all predecessors of Plato.

Pythagoras believed that it was man’s choice to move away from the Monad principle of the Olympian Gods into the polar-opposites principle of the demigods’ Dyad that brought about the fall of mankind. Behari characterized the Monad as “good and harmonious because no disharmony can proceed from ‘one.’” The Dyad, on the other hand, is “terrestrial, devilish and unlucky.” Because of its opposing polarity, the Dyad was also deemed to be the reason for “differentiation,” “contrast, discord,” “the beginning of evil.” Behari asserts that “all that was double-faced or false was called binary” by the Pythagoreans.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Behari, *Esoteric Principles of Vedic Astrology*, 266.

Albert Pike concurs, connecting the Monad with “identity,” “harmony,” while linking the Dyad with “diversity, inequality, division, separation, and vicissitudes,” “contrasts,” “the imperfect condition into which, according to the Pythagoreans, a being falls, when he detaches himself from the Monad, or God...the number two expressed the contrary idea. There commenced the fatal knowledge of good and evil.”⁴⁸

Plato believed it was not the Olympian Gods but the demigods, or demiurges, who ruled the earth. Since the demiurges are binary, the principle they use to govern the earth must be a Dyad. The Biblical narrative claims that the fall of man was caused by the eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, a symbol of a binary principle. The earth is filled with duality, confirming both Plato and the Biblical narrative.

Meyer Howard Abrams’ book *Natural Supernaturalism* deals with the literature of “a number of prominent poets, post-Kantian philosophers, writers of romances, authors of partly fictional autobiography, and exponents of the related form of the Germans called *Universalgeschichte* – a philosophical scheme of the human past, present, and predictable future – in both England and Germany during that remarkable period of creativity, the three of four decades following the outbreak of the French Revolution.”⁴⁹ From his book one learns that the major philosophers of the Enlightenment “treated the Biblical narrative as a mythical or figurative representation of valid insights into the nature and history of mankind.”⁵⁰ Abrams’ study appears to indicate that while Enlightenment philosophers dismissed the historicity of the Biblical account, they nevertheless pursued its themes to the point of even believing in a return to paradise.

For instance, William Wordsworth’s question in *The Recluse*, “why should they [Paradise, and groves/Elysian, Fortunate Fields] be a history only of departed things, or a mere fiction of

⁴⁸ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 530.

⁴⁹ Meyer Howard Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc, 1971), 11-12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

what never was?” not only acknowledges the concept of Paradise, but it offers it two options: one, of having once existed but being now departed, and two, of having never existed and being a mere fiction. Thus, even in the Age of Reason, which did away with a historical Paradise, we see, from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, where Satan and his evil angels overthrew innocence, to Keats’ *Hyperion*, where the fallen Titans dethroned Saturn, the theme of a long-lost paradise and the fall, which still live in rhymes and verses of heightened linguistic beauty:

This paradise I give thee, count it thine
 To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
 Of every tree that in the garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth;
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of good and evil, which I have set
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
 Amid the garden by the tree of life,
 Remember that I warn thee, shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat’st thereof, my sole command
 Transgress’d, inevitably thou shalt die,
 From that day mortal, and this happy state
 Shalt lose, expell’d from hence into a world
 Of woe and sorrow....
 ...O sons, like one of us Man is become
 To know both good and evil, since his taste
 Of that defended fruit; but let him boast
 His knowledge of good lost, and evil got,
 Happier had it suffic’d him to have known
 Good by itself, and evil not at all...
Paradise lost, Milton

Milton’s words, “the tree whose operation brings knowledge of good and evil,” is an enigma even to this day, but the assumption it raises is that before Adam’s eating of it he had no such knowledge of good, or of evil. Two conclusions can be gathered from Milton’s poem: the tree, or the principle it represented, brought woe and sorrow and the bitter consequence of death, from which we can deduce that, prior to eating of it, there was no woe, sorrow, or death.

Abrams states that Keats’ *Hyperion* “is a Miltonic epic, but it embodies its inquiry into the rationale of evil in a Greco-Roman myth, substituting for Milton’s ‘loss of Eden’ its pagan analogue, the loss of the Saturnian Golden Age. Keats’ *Hyperion* depicts a Saturn pained in

bewilderment at the cause of the fall of man...Again and again Saturn asks the question, Why? Who? How? What justification can there be in the course of things for the destruction of the easy felicity of the Golden Age, through the overthrow of its blameless deities?—and he answers despairingly that he cannot ‘find reason why ye should be thus:/No, no-where can unriddle.’”⁵¹

Yet, soon enough Keats himself gives us the answer to *Hyperion*’s dilemma:

Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature’s law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove.

Here is Keats’ version of the cause of the fall: “We fall by course of Nature’s law,” and not by an action of the gods.

Abrams takes Keats’ answer to the fall one step further, explaining what is meant by Nature and identifying it as a moral principle: “This answer, though not invalid, is insufficient, and the narrative moves toward the revelation that suffering, even when undeserved, is explicable not merely by a natural law, but by a moral principle as well.”⁵²

The concept that Nature is an inherent natural order in the cosmos was a predominant opinion in the Enlightenment. This natural order was characterized by a contrary, opposing polarity. Describing Wordsworth’s childhood, Abrams states that “no sooner does Wordsworth bring the story of his life as a child engaged in the ordinary activities of bathing, basking in the sun, and running through the fields and woods, than he turns to the correlative presentation of his soul in direct engagement with nature, as it is formed by contrary influences of the external scene: ‘Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up/Foster’d alike by beauty and by fear.’”⁵³ To Abrams, speculation on the natural world and its dichotomy is not an aesthetic, but a theological

⁵¹ Ibid., 125.

⁵² Ibid., 125, 126.

⁵³ Ibid., 97.

and moral speculation. He points out that “Wordsworth describes his crisis as having, as involving, explicitly, his despair about a solution to the problem of the good and evil of our moral state.”⁵⁴

Abram’s description of Wordsworth’s interaction with nature is one “formed by contrary influences,” here called “beauty and fear.” Wordsworth’s “problem of the good and evil of our moral state” is echoed by the Scottish author Thomas Carlyle, whose eccentric fictional philosopher, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, speaks of the same contrariety of Nature as a “thousandfold production and destruction” and describes it as being the “reflex of our own inward Force.”⁵⁵ Carlyle’s “inward Force” and Wordsworth’s “the good and evil of our moral state” paint a picture of a human condition fractured into a state of good and evil: we are at once creators and destroyers. This divided state is both our “inward force” and our “moral state.”

The biblical paradigm claims that it was a certain type of knowledge, one which was represented by a tree in the center of the Garden of Eden that brought about the fall. This knowledge contained two opposite concepts: good and evil. Next to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, also at the center of the Garden, was another tree, the Tree of Life. When Keats speaks of Nature’s law, a law of contraries, could it be that he is speaking about the Knowledge contained in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as described in the Garden?

Whether it was the knowledge of good and evil, Nature’s law, or a moral principle, what brought about the fall also began a process of judgment in the human mind: judgment of what is good and what is evil. With judgment came a system of rewarding merit, and punishing demerit.

According to Nietzsche, good and evil, known as the knowledge of the serpent harking back to the Garden of Eden, is indeed a system of morality adopted by Judeo-Christian societies: “We have found that in all the principal moral judgments Europe has become unanimous, including

⁵⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 131.

likewise the countries where European influence prevail: in Europe people evidently *know* what Socrates thought he did not know, and what the famous serpent of old once promised to teach – they ‘know’ to-day what is good and evil.”⁵⁶

Pythagoras’ ancient belief that the Olympian Monad was preferable to the two-faced Dyad principle of the demigods was radically challenged by the thinkers of the Enlightenment. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* William Blake would take the position that “without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.”⁵⁷ Yet Blake’s assessment that good is passive Reason and evil is active Energy can be somewhat misleading, for reason and energy are not absolutes, and can be interchangeable. Evil can also be passive reason, and good can also be active energy. Blake’s Reason and Energy seem to be interchangeable much like the characters in *Die Zauberflöte*, who move in and out of the planes of good and evil. Furthermore, Blake makes a distinction between Good and Evil, the two components of the Dyad, rather than between the Dyad and the Monad.

While exploring the cause of the fall of man, Enlightenment philosophers also looked for a solution to man’s predicament. Most of them even believed in a return to paradisiacal conditions. In spite of moments lacking in hope, Blake persevered in the belief of a renewal of the golden age. According to Abrams, Schelling looked forward to “the poet-prophet who will sing the greatest of all epics, of which the theme will be the journey back to the lost paradise, or golden again, which is the restoration of a lost unity of the human intellect with itself and with nature.”⁵⁸ It is peculiar that Schelling’s prediction of the future golden age entails a reunification of man with himself and with nature, promising a rather lonely future. Missing from this picture

⁵⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1907), 126.

⁵⁷ William Blake, *The Early Illuminated Books* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 144

⁵⁸ Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 224-225.

of recovered Paradise is a reunion with the rest of mankind, or even with God, leaving man in the same fragmented condition in which he now finds himself.

Schiller addressed this very issue of man's isolation. Abrams indicates that out of Ferguson, Rousseau, and Herder, Schiller synthesized "his own complex dialectic of human history, and developed them into what remains a classic diagnosis of the ills of modern society in terms of division, fragmentation, isolation, conflict, and distortion ... In our society individuals are 'fragments' of a whole and, 'one might almost be tempted to assert, the various faculties appear as separate in practice as they are distinguished by the psychologist in theory, and we see ... whole classes of men, developing but one part of their potentialities.'" ⁵⁹

Abrams voices Schiller's belief that the "inner unity of human nature" was severed by the "sharper divisions between the sciences' and the 'more rigorous separation of ranks and occupations,' and thus 'a disastrous conflict sets its harmonious powers at variance.'" ⁶⁰ Abrams describes Schiller's arrival at the conclusion that it is civilization's compartmentalization of mankind's earthly experience that caused its brokenness:

"It was civilization [Kultur] itself," Schiller dramatically announces, "which inflicted this wound upon modern man"...But (O felix division) the self-division and "fragmentary specialization of human powers" by which "individuals...suffer under the curse of this cosmic purpose" is the indispensable way to a greater generic good; for "little as individuals might benefit from this fragmentation of their being, there was no other way in which the species as a whole could have progressed." ⁶¹

To Schiller, the fall, caused by the moral law of contrary forces, was the best thing that could have happened to the human race in the way of progress, even though individuals benefited little from the fragmentation of their being. Abrams quotes from *Sämtliche Werke*, XIV, p. 144: "This fall [Abfall] of man from instinct—which to be sure brought moral evil into the creation,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 211.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 211.

⁶¹ Ibid., 211-212.

but only in order to make moral good therein possible—is, without any contradiction, the most fortunate and greatest event in the history of mankind.”⁶²

Blake also addressed this splintering or fragmentation and the need for reunification. Abrams states that Blake’s version of the fall entailed “a falling apart, a ‘fall into Division;’ and since this is a fragmentation of unitary man both into isolated individuals and into an alien external world, the fall coincides with the creation of man and nature, as we ordinarily experience these entities.”⁶³

Like Blake, Kant believed in the splintered human psyche pulled apart by good and evil. To him, mankind shifts in and out of two realities, the noumenal and the phenomenal. Kant’s thought is explained by Abrams as having the “consequent view that to be civilized involves a continuous tension, which can never be completely resolved, between the categorical demands of the noumenal ego, or moral will, which assumes absolute freedom, and the inescapable limitations of the phenomenal ego, or man as a part of nature, and therefore subject both to his instinctual and sensual drives and to the laws of strict causal necessity.”⁶⁴

Here is described a satiation in which the moral will wishes to do “good,” the right thing, the moral thing. The phenomenal ego lives for itself and has no regard for the moral will, its own “instinctual sensual drives” either overriding or subjugating the noumenal; together, the two cause a “continuous tension.”

From Abrams’ writings one also gathers that Kant pondered whether the knowledge of good and evil was a gain or a loss, given that it brought choice. Abrams relates that to Kant, the fall represented a shift from “instinctual behavior” to conscious “rational thought,” thus allowing humanity to have true choice.⁶⁵ Thus one gathers that in Kant’s opinion the fall was necessary, even though it may have caused evils and vices that were not known to mankind prior to the

⁶² Ibid., 208-209.

⁶³ Ibid., 258.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 199-200.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 205.

introduction of the duality of good and evil. To Kant this new condition was preferable to the previous innocence and ignorance thought to exist before the fall. Abrams quotes Kant's assessment of mankind's fallen state, from the essay *Conjectural Origin of the History of Man*: "the first step out of this condition was, on the moral side, a fall, and on the physical side the result of this fall was a host of evils in life (consequently, a mode of punishment) never known before." ⁶⁶

In *Hyperion*, Keats heralds a certain kind of knowledge as the knowledge that Apollo seeks. Abrams states: "this knowledge is the knowledge of good and evil, in a sudden expansion of consciousness to the recognition that all process entails loss, and there can be no creative progress except through the painful destruction, however unmerited, of the preceding stage." ⁶⁷ Abrams then quotes from *Hyperion*:

Knowledge enormous made a God of me/Names, deed, gray legends, dire events,
rebellions/Majesties, Sovran voices, agonies/Creations and destroying, all at
once/Pour into the wide hollows of my brain, And deify me. ⁶⁸

Abrams explains that "Apollo becomes truly a god (and so, by the grim justice of the immanent rationale of things, unintentionally effects the overthrow of the innocent Hyperion) only willingly assuming humanity and its burden of the mystery that through loss and suffering alone can we rise from simple and ignorant innocence to the higher identity or a more inclusive, complex, and integral awareness."⁶⁹ Here the tables are reversed, and Paradise, the state prior to the fall, is characterized as "simple and ignorant innocence," having an implied inferiority to the "inclusive, complex, and integral awareness" of good and evil, which brought about loss and suffering. And yet reason would surmise that what brought about a fall cannot at the same time bring back Paradise, or bring about a god, unless it was a fallen Paradise or a fallen god.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 126.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 126-127.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is best known for the invention of the Dialectical Method in philosophy. He held that conflict is a necessary element of life, without which the world would be a static, complacent world. Abrams states that “for Hegel, the inherent goal of the total process of spirit, as manifested in the course of human thought, is finally and completely to reclaim for consciousness the world from which it had been alienated by the initial act in which it became conscious: ‘The spirit is this movement of becoming something other for itself, i.e., an object for its self, and then to sublimate this otherhood.... [It] becomes estranged and then returns to itself from estrangement ...and becomes the property of consciousness.’”⁷⁰

The Golden Age was also very much a part of ancient Egypt’s consciousness. Their set of beliefs included a creation and a creator, and they believed it was evil that brought about the end of paradise. Embedded in the Egyptian myth of their celestial cow was the concept that the universe was unified, that is, men and gods, were all together, they were “one.” One of the ancient Egyptian texts that allude to a shift from paradise to paradise lost was written for a deceased Egyptian king. The text, taken from Mpay Kemboly’s *The Question of Evil in Ancient Egypt*, points out a reversal in reality in an address to Re, the sun god:

Hear it, O Re, this word which I say to you.
 Your body is in N, O Re; and (so) make your body live in N,
 O Re.
 The baboons are slaughtered by the leopard
 and the leopard is killed by the baboons.
 [O you] that eunuch (?), [O you] this male, the runner
 runs from you,
 (you) who belong to this first generation of punishment and
 vindication
 which was born before wrath came into being,
 which was born before noise came into being,
 which was born before strife came into being,
 which was born before conflict came into being.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., 183.

⁷¹ Mpay Kemboly, *The Question of Evil in Ancient Egypt* (London: Golden House Publications, 2010), 38-39.

This text indicates the emergence of a "first generation of punishment and vindication" that brought wrath, noise, strife and conflict into being. If there was a "first generation of punishment and vindication," then it is logical to infer that prior to this "first generation" there was no such thing as "punishment and vindication." This statement brings to light a new way of being and thinking, a way in which punishment and vindication have become predominant through the enforcement of an exacting moral law and lists the consequences brought into the world as "wrath," "strife," and "conflict." This is consonant with Kant's statement that the fall brought about "a host of evils in life (consequently, a mode of punishment) never known before."⁷²

Kemboly claims that ancient Egyptians described a "primordial combat," a "primeval combat," and a "cosmic battle." He states:

Some scholars, especially those who have worked on the cosmogonic texts from the Ptolemaic temple of Horus in Edfu, such as Goyon and Finnestad, claim that they found in them the motif of a primordial combat. According to this motif, there was a battle between the creator and the forces of chaos or evil, which are represented either by the waters of the primeval ocean, or in most cases by a serpent which might be associated with *Apophis*.⁷³

According to the Hebrew and Christian texts, it is with the serpent that the opposing duality of good and evil was born. In *"The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized,"* James Charlesworth documents the use of serpent symbolism throughout history and asserts that "the serpent appears significantly in creation myths in all known cultures. These extended from Mesopotamia to Egypt, and from the Middle East and Africa to Mexico and Australia."⁷⁴ He adds that "the serpent symbolism in the Middle East absorbed many contradictory meanings – light and darkness, life and death, good and evil, Satan and

⁷² Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 205.

⁷³ Kemboly, *The Question of Evil*, 294.

⁷⁴ James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 417.

God.”⁷⁵ Charlesworth then states that “the serpent is celebrated by Jews and Greeks as the animal who has wisdom.”⁷⁶ It would appear that the wisdom of the serpent is one that contains, or at least is associated with, a contrary duality.

It is the very nature of contradiction, of two opposing forces embodied into one being, which characterizes the serpent and the principle it is related to. *Die Zauberflöte* is probably the best-known artistic expression in our time for the theme of light and darkness, the symbols that represent good and evil. Waldoff’s study of *Die Zauberflöte* eventually divides the opera into two such opposing sides: the positive and the negative, good and evil. Air, light, day, knowledge, truth, love, friendship, forgiveness are all portrayed as positives, along with their representative characters, Sarastro, Tamino, Pamina, Papageno and Papagena, and the Three Youths. On the negative side, the side of darkness and evil, we traditionally find the Queen of the Night, Monostatos and the Three Ladies. They are characterized by darkness, night, ignorance, deception, hate, enmity, and revenge. And yet these characters cannot be intrinsically good or intrinsically evil, for, as discussed earlier, they are capable of shifting from one camp to another as it suits their purposes. This thesis proposes that rather than being intrinsically either good or evil they are intrinsically both good and evil, belonging to the realm of the Dyad.

From this observation, it would seem logical that, in spite of appearances, both so-called good and evil characters are one and the same in their inner, fundamental core. Human beings are also capable of walking seamlessly into one plane from the other. We are neither intrinsically good, nor intrinsically evil; we operate by an intrinsic dualism. This is the condition of our human nature, and it was to this schizoid human circumstance that Wordsworth alluded in *The Recluse* when he wrote of “the good and evil of our mortal state.” Since all human beings can fluctuate between good and evil, on a human plane there is no true opposite to this chaotic duality, which explains why the Pythagoreans ascribed true unity and oneness only to the divine.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 417.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 419.

To Nietzsche, however, the knowledge as the knowledge of good and evil ought to become entirely extinct. Nearly a century after *Die Zauberflöte*, he would seek to draw this subject to a close in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), in an attempt to move away from what he narrowly characterized as the European Judeo-Christian morality system. He encapsulated the solution to this dilemma in the few, simple words of a maxim: “What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil.”⁷⁷

Nietzsche’s maxim suggests that love stands “beyond” or apart from good and evil. Love, pure and unadulterated makes none of the judgments of good and evil, and embraces the good and the evil alike. Pure and indivisible love accepts all and works with all; and in that acceptance, it redeems all. Only Pythagoras’ concept of the Monad stands in contrast to the fractured Dyad, and if the fall was brought about by a detachment from the Monad, then logic would assume that a reattachment to it would bring about a return to Paradise.

⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 98.

THE THEME OF WISDOM IN *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*

The theme of “Weisheit” (wisdom) emerges in the opening scenes of *Die Zauberflöte* and reappears often throughout the work. The essence of the opera’s message is wisdom, which the word “light” symbolizes.

The Queen’s first words to Tamino paint him as “innocent, wise, and devout.” As he leaves to rescue Pamina he is guided and accompanied by “Three Boys, young, handsome, pure and wise.” The Boys’ wisdom is later repeated by the priests: “Sey standhaft, duldsam und verschwiegen” (be resolute, patient and silent).

Upon finding Sarastro’s castle, Tamino realizes it is not a magician’s den, but a Temple of Wisdom. The Temple appears to be a place where the gods dwell, a place where “prudence and work and skills” reside, and where “vice cannot easily hold sway.”

TAMINO

Wo bin ich nun? was wird mit mir?
Ist dies der Sitz der Götter hier?
Es zeigen die Pforten, es zeigen die Säulen,

Dass Klugheit und Arbeit und Künste hier weilen;
Wo Thätigkeit thronet, und Müsiggang weicht,
Erhält seine Herrschaft das Laster nicht leicht.

TAMINO

Where am I now? What is happening to me?
Is this the seat of the gods here?
The gates show, the pillars show

That prudence and work and skills reside here;
Where activity reigns and idleness succumbs,
Vice cannot easily hold sway.

Doch zeigen die Pforten – es
zeigen die Säulen,

The gates certainly show –
the pillars show

Tamino’s favorable first impression of the Temple of Wisdom confuses him at the discovery that this is where Sarastro, the “Bösewicht” (villain) resides. Attempting to enter the Temple, he encounters the Old Priest who informs him that Sarastro is the ruler in the Temple of Wisdom. Tamino is at first puzzled, then alarmed. He cannot believe that the “villain,” “monster” and “tyrant” who abducted the woman he loves is the one who rules in this place which appears to be

the “seat of the gods.” He prepares to leave, filled with disgust at such hypocrisy, for Sarastro’s actions do not harmonize with such claims of wisdom:

TAMINO: Sarastro herrscht in diesen Gründen?

PRIESTER: Ja! ja! Sarastro herrschet hier.

TAMINO: Doch in dem Weisheitstempel nicht.

PRIESTER: Er herrscht im Weisheitstempel hier.

TAMINO: So ist denn alles Heucheley!

PRIESTER: Willst du schon wieder gehn?

TAMINO: Ja, ich will gehn, froh, und frey, nie euren Tempel sehn.

TAMINO: Sarastro rules in these grounds?

PRIEST: Yes! Yes! Sarastro rules here.

TAMINO: Not, however, in the temple of wisdom?

PRIEST: He rules here in the temple of wisdom.

TAMINO: So everything is then hypocrisy!

PRIEST: Do you already want to leave again?

TAMINO: Yes, I want to leave, happy and free, and never see your temple.

The Old Priest convinces Tamino that he has been deceived by the Queen of the Night. The High Priest in the Temple of Wisdom is noble, a benign ruler, he assures him. The Priest, a religious authority, justifies Sarastro’s forceful actions, claiming Sarastro “acts only according to duty.” Thus Sarastro is gradually transformed in Tamino’s mind, and his former misgivings are supplanted by a new mental image. From here on, Tamino’s world view is turned completely upside down.

Jessica Waldoff calls this the moment of “recognition.” Tamino undergoes a reversal of reality, supposedly moving from a state “ignorance” to a state “knowledge.” Tamino’s reversal also changes his concept of what constitutes wisdom. What he once considered the height of perfidy now becomes acceptable and wise.

Sarastro and the Queen are dependent on each other for a definition of their characters. When one is good, the other is evil; according to this black-and-white paradigm they cannot both be good, or evil. But because they can so easily shift from one position into another, they both are, in reality, “good and evil.” Here is a phenomenon that we can all understand: he/she who is both good and evil is fractured into two, regardless of what label is given him/her. In this

context it appears illogical to state that Sarastro represents light and that the Queen represents darkness. Instead, both Sarastro and the Queen represent a Dyad, a system that contains both light and darkness.

Sarastro's good, tender, and loving side surfaces during his first interaction with Pamina.

From this exchange it even appears as if he has a soft heart for her:

PAMINA

Herr! ich bin zwar Verbrecherinn!
Ich wollte deiner Macht entfliehn;
Doch ganz gehört die Schuld nicht mir!

Der böse Mohr verlangte Liebe,
Darum, o Herr, entfloh ich ihm.

SARASTRO

Steh auf, erheitre dich, o Liebe!
Denn ohne erst in dich zu dringen,
Weiss ich von deinem Herzen mehr,
Es ist für mich von Liebe leer;
Zur Liebe will ich dich nicht zwingen,
Doch geb' ich dir die Freiheit nicht.

PAMINA

My lord! It is true that I have transgressed!
I wanted to escape your power;
But the guilt does not rest entirely with me!
The wicked Moor demanded love,
Hence, my lord, I fled from him.

SARASTRO

Arise, be cheerful, my dear!
For without first pressing you,
I know more about your heart,
It is empty of love for me;
I won't force you to love,
On the other hand I won't give you your freedom.

Allein die Schuld ist nicht an
mir!

Darum, o Herr, entfloh ich
dir!

Du liebest einen andern sehr

But the guilt is not on me!

Hence, my lord, I fled from
you!

You love another very much

This is one of Sarastro's tenderest moments. His music, to the words "Du liebest einen andern sehr" (You love another very much), passes briefly through c minor, a harmonic shift which highlights his feelings for the girl:

411
 ich von deinem Herzen mehr, du liebestei-nen an- dern sehr,
 Fl. I
 Viol.

Sarastro soon changes colors, however, showing his dualistic character. Pamina's yearning for her mother is quickly interrupted, and his former tenderness is transformed into power and control, "steht in meiner Macht" (stands in my power), in m. 428 and on:

423 PAMINA
 doch geb' ich dir die Frei- heit nicht. Mich ru- fet
 Fl. I
 Ob.
 Vc.
 Archi
 Cor. di B.
 Fag.

426 SARASTRO
 ja die Kin- des- pflicht, denn mei- ne Mut- ter - steht in mei- ner
 Fl.
 Ob.
 Fag.
 Cor. di B.
 Vc.
 Archi
 mf

429 PAMINA
 Macht, du wür- dest um dein Glück ge- bracht, wenn ich dich ih- ren Hän- den lie- ße.- Mir
 Archi
 cresc.
 f
 Fl.
 Cor. di B.
 Fag.

PAMINA
 Mich rufet ja, die Kindespflicht,
 Denn meine Mutter –

SARASTRO
 Steht in meiner Macht;
 Du würdest um dein Glück gebracht,

Wenn ich dich ihren Händen liesse.

PAMINA

Mir klingt der Mutter Nahmen süsse;
Sie ist es –

SARASTRO

Und ein stolzes Weib.
Ein Mann muss eure Herzen leiten;
Denn ohne ihn pflegt jedes Weib
Aus ihrem Wirkungskreiss zu schreiten.

PAMINA

It is my duty as a child that calls me,
For my mother –

SARASTRO

Stands in my power;
It wouldn't make for your happiness
If I released you into her hands.

PAMINA

The name of my mother is sweetness to my ears;
She is the one –

SARASTRO

And a haughty woman.
A man must lead the hearts of women;
For without him every woman is apt
To step outside her proper sphere.

The sweet melodic line which a moment ago revealed a soft heart now turns into a jagged, rhythmic line denoting his impatience with Pamina's stubbornness and lack of compliance with his will. The harmony also changes from a serene progression to one that passes through a diminished chord, cadencing peremptorily on the words "Macht" (power).

The Queen's duality also seeps through her words and music. Her first aria portrays it perfectly. It begins with a strong declaration, showing off a powerful character:

Recitativo
KÖNIGIN DER NACHT

O zitt-re nicht, mein lie-ber Sohn,

+ Ob.
+ Fag.

Archi
p

p cresc. f

Tutti

sf

Her tone becomes sweet and tender when she talks about her daughter, in g minor:

20

Andante

Mut-ter-herz zu trö-sten.- Zum Lei-den bin ich aus-er-ko-ren,

Viol.

Archi
p

mf

But at the mention of the hated Sarastro, “ein Bösewicht” (a villain), she is transformed into palpable rage, and her flash of fire is echoed by the orchestral accompaniment:

30

sie ging all mein Glück ver-lo-ren, ein Bö-se-wicht, ein

Archi
f

Tutti

34

Bö-se-wicht ent-floh mit ihr. Noch seh' ich ihr

Archi
f

p

Fag. I

Just before Sarastro’s first entrance, the choir of priests reinforces the view that Sarastro’s most salient quality is, again, “wisdom:”

CHOR

Es lebe Sarastro, Sarastro soll leben!
 Er ist es, dem wir uns mit Freuden ergeben!
 Stets mög' er des Lebens als Weiser sich freun.
 Er ist unser Abgott, dem alle sich weihn.

CHORUS

Long live Sarastro, Sarastro shall live!
 He is the one to whom we joyfully devote ourselves!
 May he ever enjoy life as a wise man.
 He is our idol, to whom all are dedicated.

The wisdom expounded in *Die Zauberflöte* must be studied from within this dualistic context. Sarastro the villain and Sarastro the high priest make up a complete picture of the man. By the same token, the Queen as mother and the Queen as avenger inform her totality.

As villain, Sarastro uses force and removes freedom of choice; as “wise” high priest, he shapes his world by complete control. Both Sarastro and the Queen accomplish their goals either through rewards or punishments. Sarastro’s purpose for Tamino is to get him through the initiation process so that Tamino may be his successor in the enforcement of this morality system. His purpose for Pamina, in spite of the fact that he has a certain measure of love for her, is to give her to Tamino for a reward. To him, the Queen, a hypocrite, is worthy of death. The Queen’s motives fluctuate between motherly love and revenge. In the end, revenge outweighs love, and she even sells out her daughter to the hated Moor, Monostatos.

Sarastro elevates the pursuit of virtue above all things, but his virtue is accomplished through evil actions. He causes pain, suffering, destruction, and removes one’s freedom of choice. He might even see these actions as evil, but nevertheless necessary.

Sarastro’s core motives are revealed on the occasion of Papageno/Pamina’s foiled attempt to escape. Sarastro catches them in the nick of time, and the two stand trembling before the ruler. Monostatos enters bringing Tamino. Pamina and Tamino embrace. Monostatos becomes indignant. Fueled by jealousy, he tries to separate them, urging Sarastro to punish the Prince. At the same time that Monostatos demands punishment for Tamino, he exalts his own zeal and fidelity. At first, Sarastro appears to respond to the Moor in an approving way, but soon we

realize his sarcasm, for instead of bedecking him with laurels, he orders him to be lashed seventy-seven times on the soles of his feet, as we later find out:

MONOSTATOS
 Welch eine Dreistigkeit!
 Gleich auseinander, das geht zu weit.
 Dein Sklave liegt zu deinen Füßen,
 Lass den verwegenen Frevler büßen;
 Bedenk' wie frech der Knabe ist!
 Durch dieses seltenen Vogels List
 Wollt er Pamina dir entführen:
 Allein ich wusst' ihn auszuspüren.
 Du kennst mich – meine Wachsamkeit –

SARASTRO
 Verdient dass man ihr Lorbeern streut!
 He! gebt dem Ehrenmann sogleich –

MONOSTATOS
 Schon deine Gnade macht mich reich.

SARASTRO
 Nur sieben und siebenzig Sohlenstreich.

MONOSTATOS
 Ach Herr! den Lohn verhofft' ich nicht.

SARASTRO
 Nicht Dank! es ist ja meine Pflicht.

MONOSTATOS
 What audacity!
 Separate immediately, that's going too far.
 Your slave lies at your feet,
 Make the bold transgressor pay;
 Just think how insolent the boy is!
 Through the cunning of this rare bird
 He wanted to snatch Pamina from you:
 But I was able to waylay him.
 You know me – my vigilance –

SARASTRO
 Deserves that you be bedecked with laurel!
 Hey! Give the honourable man immediately –

MONOSTATOS
 Just your favour makes me rich.

SARASTRO
Just seventy-seven lashings of the slipper.

MONOSTATOS
Oh master! I hardly expected that reward.

SARASTRO
Nothing to thank! It's only my duty.

CHORUS
Long live Sarastro, the divine sage,
He rewards and punishes within the same orbit.

The allusion to Jesus Christ's answer to the Apostle Peter's question is clear: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven."⁷⁸ This appears to be an intentional distancing from the principles of mercy. In this comparison the true opposite principles are defined, Monad and Dyad, which translate into two modes of keeping order.

The chorus in the above exchange finally gives us a concrete definition of Sarastro's wisdom: "Es lebe Sarastro der göttliche Weise, / Er lohnet und strafet in ähnlichem Kreise" (Long live Sarastro, the divine sage, he rewards and punishes within the same orbit). This statement discloses his Dyadic wisdom. He takes two contradictory actions based on the same principle. Duality is what defines him. Sarastro rules through manipulation.

The priests' statement is made clearer by the Hamburg version of the libretto. The Hamburg score was published in Hamburg by Friedrich Hermann Nestler and used at the first performance of *Die Zauberflöte* in Hamburg, 1793. Michael Freyhan claims that the "performances [of *Die Zauberflöte*] in Bonn and Hamburg in 1793 appear to have used the first-edition text twenty-one years before its publication by Simrock."⁷⁹ This score translates the

⁷⁸ Matthew 18:21-22, KJV.

⁷⁹ Michael Freyhan, *The Authentic Magic Flute Libretto* (London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), x.

passage above as, “Long live Sarastro, reigning in wisdom, who punishes just as wisely as he rewards.”⁸⁰

Here, rewarding and punishing stem from the same source: wisdom. Sarastro rewards and punishes the subjects of his kingdom because he has a vision of order. His duty is to keep order, and he does so through what he learns from the gods: the moral law of opposing forces. That is his wisdom.

More evidences of Sarastro’s punishing role can be found. In Act 1, scene 9, the slaves rejoice that Pamina has escaped from the Moor, and delight in the thought that he will surely be punished by Sarastro:

Verwandlung. Ein prächtiges ägyptisches Zimmer. Zwei Sklaven tragen schöne Polster nebst einem prächtigen, türkischen Tisch heraus, breiten Teppiche auf; sodann kommt der dritte Sklave.

3 SKLAVE
Hahaha!

1 SKLAVE
Pst! Pst!

2 SKLAVE
Was soll den das Lachen?

3 SKLAVE
Unser Peiniger, der alles belauschende Mohr wird morgen sicherlich gehangen oder gespiesst. – Pamina! – Hahaha!

1 SKLAVE
Nun?

3 SKLAVE
Das reizende Mädchen! – Hahaha!

2 SKLAVE
Nun?

3 SKLAVE
Ist entsprungen.

1, 2 SKLAVE

⁸⁰ Freyhan, *The Authentic Magic Flute Libretto*, 110.

Entsprungen?

1 SKLAVE

Und sie entkam?

3 SKLAVE

Unfehlbar! – Wenigstens ist's mein wahrer Wunsch.

1 SKLAVE

O, Dank euch, ihr guten Götter! Ihr habt meine Bitte erhört.

3 SKLAVE

Sagt' ich euch nicht immer, es wird doch ein Tag
für uns scheinen, wo wir gerochen, und der schwarze
Monostatos bestraft werden wird?

2 SKLAVE

Was spricht nun der Mohr zu der Geschichte?

1 SKLAVE

Er weiss doch davon?

3 SKLAVE

Natürlich! Sie entlief vor seinen Augen. – Wie mir
Einige Brüder erzählten, die im Garten arbeiteten und
Von weitem athen und hörten, so ist der Mohr nicht
mehr zu retten; auch wenn Pamina von Sarastros Ge-
folge wieder eingebracht würde.

As soon as the scene has changed into a chamber richly furnished in the Egyptian style, two slaves bring on beautiful cushions and an ornate Turkish table: they roll out carpets. Enter the third slave.

3 SLAVE

Ha, ha, ha!

1 SLAVE

Pst! Pst!

2 SLAVE

What are you laughing about?

3 SLAVE

Our tormentor, the Moor who overhears all, will certainly be hanged or beheaded tomorrow. Pamina! Ha, ha, ha!

1 SLAVE

Well?

3 SLAVE
The delectable maiden! Ha, ha, ha!

2 SLAVE
Well?

3 SLAVE
Has escaped.

1, 2 SLAVES
Escaped?

1 SLAVE
And she got away?

3 SLAVE
Certainly. That at least is my dearest wish.

2 SLAVE
O gods, I thank you! You have heard my prayer.

1 SLAVE
Haven't I always told you that the day of our revenge would come and black Monostatos will be punished?
What does the Moor say about this?

1 SLAVE
Has he heard about it yet?

3 SLAVE
Of course! She escaped right under his nose. According to some of our men, who were working in the garden and saw and heard everything from a distance, the moor will not be saved even if Pamina is caught by Sarastro's attendants.

When in Act 2, Scene 10, the Moor overhears the Queen's command that Pamina kill Sarastro, he quickly decides to turn the situation in his favor. He demands Pamina's love upon threat of disclosure. As she refuses, he threatens to kill her. Sarastro catches him in the nick of time, and violently hurls him away. When next Pamina hears Sarastro's condemnation of her mother she pleads lenience on her behalf asking him not to punish her. He says he knows everything – Pamina will see how he will seek vengeance.

Kristi Brown Montesano also sees Sarastro differently than most. Refuting Alfons Rosenberg's standard evaluation of *Die Zauberflöte*, she expresses her perspective:

Focusing on mythic images, Rosenberg ignores the historical evidence, which has more commonly demonstrated the father's tyrannical enforcement of a "will to authority" in order to protect his rule and his interests...[The] kind of essentialist-symbolic reading – all too common with *Die Zauberflöte* – merely reinforces the opera's day-versus-night propaganda, but here is the shocking truth: there is no such balanced dualism in the opera, for there is nothing even close to a parity of power. Sarastro is always in control; indeed, both he and the Queen of the Night attest to her relative powerlessness. All of the poetic discourse on birth and rebirth and on the dangers of the innately destructive, essence-devouring, supernatural Mother is strangely at odds with the actual Queen, who never wields the kind of power that Sarastro does, much less the potency of a truly "terrible goddess." She does not appear to have magical powers or military resources; after Pamina is taken, she does not raise an invading army, but pins her hopes on an almost total stranger – Tamino – merely because he is a man and therefore has a better chance of slipping into Sarastro's temples. In a sense, then, this Queen is defined by her *lack* of power. She is a sovereign (and a mother) backed into a corner – her marginal, mountainous province on the outskirts of civilization. Even after her only child and heir, Pamina, goes to the "other side," the Queen fights for the kingdom she has been denied.⁸¹

Power, rather than beneficence seems to be the key word here. Sarastro's powers are similar to the powers of the magic flute itself, for both have the desire and ability to control.

⁸¹ Kristi Brown-Montesano, *Understanding the Women of Mozart's Operas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 86.

EGYPTIAN GODHEAD – OSIRIS, ISIS, TYPHO

Sarastro wears the sevenfold Circle of the Sun on his chest, which, we are told, he inherited from the Queen of the Night's deceased husband. The sevenfold Circle of the Sun indicates that he is a successor in a line of high priests who worship Osiris the sun-god, the highest deity in ancient Egypt. Through the Circle of the Sun we realize a closer relationship between the Queen and Sarastro, which comes as a surprise, given the polar opposites they represent. But this relationship falls right in line with the premise of this thesis: Sarastro and the Queen, though appearing to be in conflict, form a unity. This is explainable in the context of the Egyptian godhead.

The major figures in Egyptian mythology are Osiris, Isis, and Typho. According to Born, these three formed the Egyptian godhead. Although they represented diametrically opposed principles, they ruled as one. Osiris embodied benevolence, Isis contained the creative power of Nature and typified wisdom. Typho embodied evil, but also justice, in a very specific way.

One of von Born's most enlightening statements regarding Egypt's polytheism declares: "That which the populace saw as so many different gods, for the priests was actually just the different properties of one and only god, whom they knew through the Mysteries."⁸² Von Born suggests that the only reason the populace was given so many gods to worship was because they could not grasp the invisible world of the deities:

How can you expect a raw, simple, and primitive people that from their first origins only knew physical gods they could see, how could you ask them to come up with the strength of soul to elevate themselves to the level of recognizing a god they could not see? For that reason the priests gave the people a choice of venerating Osiris, Apis, Isis, Horus, Harpocrates, Anubis, Macedo, Canopus and Typho.⁸³

⁸² Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 59.

⁸³ Ibid.

The priests believed in the one godhead. Through the Mysteries, they knew that the godhead comprised of Osiris, Isis, and Typho worked together, even though they embodied opposite concepts. Von Born states that “Osiris was the origin of all good things.”⁸⁴ His sister/wife Isis represented his “creative power,” and magic. Together, Isis and Osiris also represented the belief that man and woman could reach to godhead and become gods. Here is an allusion to the exchange between the serpent and Eve in the Garden of Eden:

Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.⁸⁵

The idea of becoming a god is also present in *Die Zauberflöte*. It is found in Pamina/Papageno’s duet in Act 1. “Bei Männer, welche Liebe fühlen” is a love duet, the duet Pamina should have probably sung with Tamino:

38 Pam. *f* Mann, rei - chen an die Gott - heit an. *p* Mann und Weib, und Weib, und *sotto voce*

P. *f* Mann, rei - chen an die Gott - heit an. *p* Mann und Weib, und Weib, und *sotto voce*

f Archi *p* Clar. Fag.

42 Pam. *f* Mann, rei - chen an die Gott - heit an. *p* die Gott - heit

P. *f* Mann, rei - chen an die Gott - heit an, *p* an die Gott - heit

f Tutti *fp* Archi

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Gen 3:1-5, KJV.

The chiasmus, “Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann, Reihen sich den Göttern an” (Man and wife, and wife and man, join up with the gods) point to the literal double marriages of Tamino/Pamina, Papageno/Papagena, but also to a mystical marriage, which takes place in the realm of principles. This is a marriage not only to each other, but to the gods as well. As they join the gods they also join what the gods represent and in that sense they become gods. The larger significance of this marriage is discussed later on in the section THE SACRED MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE.

Osiris was the sun god, but also the ruler of the underworld. His wife Isis was ruler of the visible world, Nature. Through marriage, they could bring these two worlds together and become a godhead. Their son, the infant Horus, also called Harpocrates, embodied Osiris’ “grandeur that could not be explained in words, one just had to be quiet in veneration of Harpocrates,” and the adult Horus represented his “benevolence.” Anubis signified “his strength,” “Canopus his benevolent deeds,” and “Typho was the justice seeker who made things right.”⁸⁶ As the deity representing evil, Typho typified destruction, so how could he make all things right? Typho made all things right not because he was beneficent, but because he was punished for his evil deeds. There was a “tooth for tooth” justice in relation to Typho. Isis and Horus hunted him down and killed him for the murder of Osiris, and by that fact, the universe was returned to right order.

OSIRIS

Von Born describes how “Egyptians came to ascribe godlike qualities to various benevolent components of their environment, the most benevolent and mightiest of all being the sun, which they venerated under the name of Osiris. Because of the sun’s majestic beauty, light and

⁸⁶ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 59.

warmth, it was considered the source of all abundance and fertility. This veneration was much like the one exhibited by the Chaldeans, the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, who venerated the sun under the various names of Bel, Moloch, Chemosh, Adonis, Saturn, Mithras, Apollo and Thebes.”⁸⁷ Gold, the noble metal, was related to the sun for obvious reasons. Von Born indicates that ancient Egyptians and Freemasons both perceived the sun as being the unchangeable symbol of god, who, from above, sends light, wisdom.

In *Sethos*, Terrasson states that “the Egyptians, who go farther back in the relations of their origin than our histories reach, say the Gods were their first kings. They name seven: Vulcan, the Sun, Agathodemon, Saturn, Osiris, Isis, and Typho. By Vulcan, to whom they assign no beginning, their philosophers meant that elementary fire, which is diffused everywhere. This same fire, re-united into one globe, is the Sun, the son of Vulcan.”⁸⁸ Terrasson goes on to say: “Agathodemon, defined by his very name, was their good genius or principle. Saturn, or Time, was the father of Osiris and Isis, brother and sister, husband and wife, the two sexes of nature. Typhon, their third brother, was always regarded by them as their evil principle.”⁸⁹

Egyptian historians claim that Osiris came to be considered the benefactor of mankind, a major influence on his contemporaries. He travelled through the countryside and charmed the country folk with music and dancing. In the mystical literature, Osiris is also sometimes referred to as the water god, because to him was attributed anything that was good and benevolent in nature. His connection to the sun is not to be confused with the symbol of fire, for the sun was not viewed as being destructive, like fire.

Von Born states that it was Osiris who invented music and dancing. He also taught agriculture and wine making, through which he developed Egypt into an interconnected and

⁸⁷ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 46.

⁸⁸ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

interdependent society. In a short time Egypt became a totalitarian society controlled by the priests.

At some point, accompanied by a number of followers, Osiris went abroad in order to spread the teaching of “beneficence,” based on the wisdom of the gods. Then Von Born states that after some time spent out of the country “Osiris returned triumphantly to Egypt, proud of the fact that all the people he had visited had been transformed thorough the wisdom or principle he had set out to teach them.”⁹⁰

The following words from von Born make a startling disclosure: “But he had forced them into civilization.”⁹¹ Terrasson’s book shares a similar story, saying Osiris undertook a “very long voyage, not before attempted, and then” went on “to give proper laws to the different nations, which were civilized by him.”⁹² Terrasson speaks of his conquests in connection with the flute: “This hero had those hymns which he sung in honour to the gods accompany’d by it [the flute]; and the verses, according to Plutarch, contain’d those precepts which he gave to the people, whom he had got together, and desirous to civilize. The same Osiris in time invented the trumpet and kettle-drums, to animate the soldiers he made use of it in his conquests.”⁹³

David Silverman relates the myth of Osiris, Isis, Horus, and Typho (Seth):

As members of the “Ennead,” or first nine gods, Isis and Osiris were two of the five siblings (along with Seth, Nephthys and Horus the Elder) born on successive days to Nut, the goddess of the sky, and Geb, the god of the earth. As Geb’s eldest son, Osiris attained kingship of the earth, and married his sister Isis, whom he had loved even in the womb. His brother Seth, in a loveless marriage to Nephthys, coveted the throne and schemed to obtain it by stealth. In the classical rendition, the unsuspecting Osiris was betrayed at a grand feast for the gods, where Seth offered a novel object – a coffin – as a “party favour” to whomever it should fit. Although various gods sought to claim the prize, the coffin had been carefully made to fit Osiris alone. Once the god was securely inside, Seth and his confederates promptly sealed the coffin and cast it into the Nile. Osiris drowned, and death was introduced in the world. With much labour, Isis then sought and retrieved the body of her slain husband, but Seth again seized the corpse and cut it into many pieces. These he scattered across Egypt, so that each province could later claim a relic and shrine of the deceased god. In company with her sister

⁹⁰ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 30.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, x-xi.

⁹³ Ibid., 97-98.

Nephthys, Isis sailed through the marshes or flew as a kite in search of the scattered parts, and at length they reunited the dismembered body of Osiris with the aid of Anubis, the god of mummification. While still a corpse, Osiris was reinvigorated through the magical abilities of Isis, so that she conceived a son and heir to the throne, Horus the Child. The orphan Horus is assaulted repeatedly by Seth and his emissaries, but through the protection of Isis he is cured of all injury. The image of the wounded Horus became a standard feature of healing spells, which typically invoke powers of the milk of Isis.⁹⁴

As the myth progressed, Egyptian priests developed a theology around this godhead, and they conducted yearly festivals reenacting the events surrounding the murder of Osiris. They also propagated the concept that Osiris was resurrected once a year.

In the above quote, Osiris is described as being “reinvigorated” once a year through the magic of Isis. The specific purpose for this yearly resurrection was Isis’ impregnation in order to give birth to Horus. This is the symbolic sacred marriage that takes place in the tales of *Dschinnistan* and in *Die Zauberflöte*, a marriage out of which is born a Prince who continues or perpetuates the teachings of the Mysteries. This suggests an archetype for the sacred marriage in *Die Zauberflöte*.

The consecration of Tamino and Pamina to the gods is made apparent by two hymns sung on their behalf. The first in Act 2, Scene 1, is Sarastro’s famous aria in F: “O Isis und Osiris schenket der Weisheit Geist dem neuen Paar!” (Oh Isis and Osiris grant the spirit of wisdom to the new pair!) The second hymn is sung by the Priests in Act 2, Scene 20, in anticipation of Tamino’s victory over the purification trials of fire and water, a preliminary requirement before he and Pamina can be united in marriage:

CHOR DER PRIESTER
 O Isis! und Osiris! welche Wonne!
 Die düstre Nacht verscheucht der Glanz der Sonne.
 Bald fühlt der edle Jüngling neues Leben;
 Bald ist er unserm Dienste ganz gegeben.
 Sein Geist ist kühn, sein Herz ist rein.

Bald wird er unsrer würdig seyn.

PRIESTS’ CHORUS

⁹⁴ David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134-135.

Oh Isis! and Osiris! what rapture!
The brightness of the sun drives away the shades of night.

Soon the noble youth will feel new life;
Soon he will be fully given over to our service.
His spirit is bold, his heart is pure.
Soon he will be worthy of us.

Because of the myth surrounding his life, death, and the yearly resurrection, Osiris the sun god has been traditionally identified as a ruler of the dead and of the afterlife, the Psychopomp, who escorted the newly deceased into the afterlife. Lying at the heart of Egypt, Osiris' death and annual resurrection contributed to a theology that affected all of Egyptian life, including the systems of politics, economy, and law.

Osiris' influence has been felt in every subsequent culture and civilization in one form or another. His role as ruler of the dead, for instance, was transcribed to other civilizations, giving birth to the Greek Zeus and the Roman Jupiter. The notion of hell, eternal punishment, began in Egypt; also the judgment of the dead, Psychostasia. These concepts are still alive today through the teachings of most religions. The notion that the soul is immortal was also propagated under the teachings of Osiris. Von Born says that Osiris, "who ruled under the image of the sun," had the power to "give life, and then to call it back:"

The awareness and the remembrance of death was something that was impressed very deeply upon the initiated and the fact that the soul is an eternal, has eternal life, it cannot die, is something that has been elaborated on in the Mysteries of Egypt and out of these Mysteries of Egypt it was transplanted to other peoples. At their festival meals, meals for guests, not in a family setting but when they had come to the end of the serving of food at a large gathering with guests, there was the custom of carrying around "the" skeleton and this was also done at the annual memorial celebration to recall Osiris who had been murdered by Typho, but who had been found again and so some of these customs that were part of annual celebrations let you become aware of some of the Mysteries even though the Egyptians veiled their Mysteries into complete silence and secrecy. Even more telling and convincing is the prayer which the priest directs to Osiris at the death bed wherever the priest is called: "you eternal one, you who rule over everything under the image and the body of the sun, you gods, you who have the power to give life and then to call it back, take me and bring me into the company of the elect." ⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 60.

Just as in Egypt Osiris fulfilled all the roles contained in the godhead, so in *Die Zauberflöte* Sarastro serves the same purpose. Sarastro is called beneficent, (Horus/Canopus), and his grandeur is apparent from his first appearance in a chariot pulled by six lions and heralded by trumpets (Harpocrates). His power and strength is unrivaled by any other character, and he is the dispenser of justice upon the evil element, (Typho, Monostatos).

Sarastro is the equivalent of the sun-god for he is the one who wears the sevenfold Circle of the Sun, as disclosed by the Queen of the Night during a conversation with Pamina:

Your father gave the sevenfold Circle of the Sun to the Initiates. That powerful Circle of the Sun, Sarastro now wears on his breast. When I tried to persuade him to change his mind, he replied with a wrinkled brow, 'Woman, my last hour is upon me – all my treasure is for you and your daughter.' 'The all-consuming Circle of the Sun –' said I, interrupting him hurriedly. 'Is destined for the Initiates,' he answered. 'Sarastro will control it as manfully as I have until now. And now no more; do not try to understand things which are inconceivable to a woman's mind. It is your duty to give yourself and your daughter to the authority of wise men.'

As the original possessor of the Circle of the Sun, Pamina's father is a representation of the mythical Osiris. At the opening of Act II, Sarastro, the inheritor of the Circle, addresses his subjects: "Initiates of the Temple of Wisdom in the service of the great gods Isis and Osiris!" His identity is confirmed. As high priest Sarastro teaches and lives the principles of Osiris.

ISIS

In *Die Zauberflöte* the Queen is the closest character to the goddess Isis. Like Isis, she is a widow. Isis is the goddess of magic and it is the Queen that holds magic, in the form of a flute. Like Isis, the Queen has a fiery temper and seeks revenge. As the "Queen of the Night," the moon is her symbol. While Osiris was worshiped under the name of the sun, Isis was associated with the moon, and the noble metal, silver.

When Osiris went abroad to teach wisdom, his sister/wife Isis remained in Egypt. It is said that she took care of the government with the help of Thoyt, the messenger of the gods, whom the Phoenicians called Taut, the Greeks Hermes, and the Romans Mercurius. Thoyt, also known as Thoth, instructed the Egyptians in the sciences and guided them into the different art forms. He designated anatomical parts, invented writing, brought governmental order and hierarchy, and introduced the ceremonies for temple worship. He saw to it that temples were built, and called men to the priesthood; these men devoted their lives to seeing that rituals were followed.⁹⁶ Isis was responsible for teaching the people how to make medicinal extracts from plants and herbs. Isis was involved with the medicinal or alchemical part of the Mysteries. It was through the magic of Isis that Osiris was resurrected once a year; she embodies all the secrets of magic.

As the goddess of nature Isis is often addressed as Nature itself. Von Born provides the inscription on her picture column in the temple of Sais: “I, nature, bring everything that is and is to be. Nobody has ever completely unveiled me.”⁹⁷

This inscription is confirmed by Schiller in *Die Sendung Moses* (1789): “Under an old statue of Isis, one reads the words: “*I am, what there is,*’ and upon a pyramid in Sais, one found the ancient and most remarkable inscription: ‘I am all, that is, that was, and that will be; no mortal hath lifted my veil.’”⁹⁸ Maynard Solomon states that Beethoven had a copy of this quote on top of his writing desk.⁹⁹

In *Die Zauberflöte*, the Three Ladies in the service of the Queen are veiled, as indicated in the stage directions: “*Tamino, dressed in a magnificent Japanese hunting costume, enters over one of the rocks; he carries a bow without arrows; he is pursued by a serpent.*” After he sings

⁹⁶ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 30.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁸ Friedrich Schiller, *Die Sendung Moses*. George W. Gregory, trans., (Washington D.C.: The Schiller Institute, 1988). http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/Schiller_essays/Mission_Moses.html, Accessed 05/20/2012.

⁹⁹ Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 146.

his initial aria *Zu Hülfe* (O help!), “...*he falls unconscious. At that moment the door of the temple opens, and Three Ladies, veiled, enter, each with a silver javelin.*”

Later, when Tamino asks Papageno if he has ever seen the Queen, Papageno replies: “See her? See the starblazing Queen? What mortal could boast of having seen her? What human sight could see through her veil woven from darkness?”

Von Born indicates that the “natural science and the continual research of its properties in the natural body was not a less useful body of knowledge of the priesthood.”¹⁰⁰ Based on their knowledge of nature came the medicinal knowledge for which the priests were responsible. Doctors were taught by the priest that they should expect to receive medicinal knowledge from the gods themselves.¹⁰¹ He further says that the priests were extremely familiar with the secrets of nature and that they “rarely carried the column of Isis or Nature, because they wanted to keep this knowledge secret; they didn’t want the symbols and knowledge drawn on the column to be available to the people, the profane.”¹⁰² Isis was often depicted holding a feather, a symbol of *Maat*, the law of justice, which shall be discussed later. Papageno, who works for the Queen, is covered in feathers, which arouses Tamino’s suspicions that Papageno must be one of her “attending spirits,” and not a human.

Isis is said to have hunted Typho, Osiris’ killer, and together with Horus she executed him, thus enacting and executing justice. In *Isis in the Ancient World*, Reginald Eldred Witt states that she was a “champion of justice,” she “typified divine anger” and “retribution for the evildoer;” “upholder of the moral law, she could be lauded as having made Nature distinguish things fair and base, as the divine queen ‘whose eyes sees everything everywhere on the face of land and sea,’ and as ‘Mistress of all things forever.’ From Isis ... sinners could not escape.”¹⁰³ *Maat* is the earliest proponent of punishment as a deterrent in the effort to keep order. Because

¹⁰⁰ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 70.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰³ Reginald Eldred Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 128.

of her relationship to *Maat*, the law of opposing forces, Isis was often also referred to as “wisdom.”

Papageno, the bird-man bird-catcher, falls under the Queen’s punishing hand for falsely claiming to have slain the serpent. “Do you know why the Queen has punished you today?” asks the second Lady, who answers her own question: “so that in future you will not tell lies to strangers.” “And so that you will never again boast of heroic deeds which were really performed by others,” concludes the third lady. Later in scene 8, Papageno’s muzzle is removed. The punishment has accomplished its purpose in curtailing his lying tendencies, and he exclaims, “I’ll never tell a lie again!”

Von Born states that truth and wisdom were the goals of the work of the Egyptian priesthood as well as that of Freemasonry, and to prove the importance and weight of this fact, he quotes Plutarch verbatim:

“He who wishes to be wise or become wise,” thus starts the book of Plutarch, “has to implore to Isis and Osiris, the immortal gods, for wisdom. Human beings cannot wish for something better, and god cannot give his creation anything better, than the realization of ultimate truth. Wisdom alone is the difference between god and humans. If god gives wisdom then god is giving as a gift part of his own. Gold and riches, of which god has no need, have a drawing power only for mortals; the blessing of an eternal life comes from a full realization of what endures among all things. The search for truth therefore is a noble wish to draw close to the gods or the godhead. It is the holiest of all occupations that take place in our Mysteries, and it is the most pleasant of that female goddess that is venerated as the wisest in our temples.”¹⁰⁴

Plutarch confirms Isis’ epithet of Wisdom: “Is the name Isis not synonymous with wisdom, and the name Typho with pride, who is an enemy and a scoffer or wisdom? ... Is that not the reason that our temple is called Iseum, because through the knowledge of Isis, and that means Nature, you reach this godhead?”¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere Born reveals that “the priest who had the highest office in Egypt wore on his chest the amulet of Isis with the inscription: “The word of truth.”¹⁰⁶

Again, Born makes a comparison with Freemasonry:

¹⁰⁴ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 126.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 127.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 128.

Is not truth, wisdom, and seeking the happiness and well-being of all mankind, the final purpose of our association? Do our laws not impress us on every level that this is the purpose of our different imaginations? Is truth not the same as the lost master-word over which recovery we rejoice in the free places which we build through our virtues? Is it not our destiny to oppose vice and ignorance and stupidity and instead spread illumination? Does not each brother work on that specific stone that he is to hew, to use for the building of the common happiness? Can there be a nobler end-purpose than for us to seek to gain more knowledge through mutual sharing of knowledge with everyone who is included in our circle, who are moving on their path towards virtue, that it be a straight path towards completion, whole and harmonious, and should he get to a place off that path to bring him back in brotherly love and to encourage him daily in the exercise of virtuous deeds, to do good things and to prevent bad things? ¹⁰⁷

Both Isis and Osiris had a number of temples dedicated to them. Isis' most famous temple was in Sais, and Osiris' in Abydos. If the Queen is a representation of Isis, then like Osiris, the Queen would also have a temple. Isis was the goddess of Nature, thus the Queen's temple also would be the temple of Nature. That there is such a temple in *Die Zauberflöte* becomes apparent when at the opening of scene 15 the stage is transformed: "*the scene changes to a sacred grove. Right at the back is a beautiful temple with the inscription Temple of Wisdom. Two other temples are joined to this temple by colonnades: the one on the right is inscribed Temple of Reason, the one on the left, Temple of Nature.*" That the Queen lives in a temple is confirmed by the fact that in the very beginning of the opera the Three Ladies in her service come out of a temple: "*He [Tamino] falls unconscious. At that moment the door of the temple opens, and Three Ladies, veiled, enter, each with a silver javelin.*" After their first encounter with him, they exit into the temple again: "*they go toward the door of the temple, which opens and closes behind them.*"

It may seem like a contradiction that the Queen and Sarastro both have Temples. This apparent paradox can only be explained if one examines it within the context of the godhead of Egypt. While Isis and Osiris represent polar opposites, they still belong to the same godhead. Throughout the esoteric literature as well as the text of *Die Zauberflöte* both Isis and Osiris are

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 130.

represented as wise. In this paradigm, Sarastro, representative of beneficence, is wise, and Isis, representative of wrath, revenge, and vindication is also wise.

The Queen's "wisdom" is revealed in the aria "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen."

She is so filled with revenge that she is even willing to forsake her own daughter:

KÖNIGIN DER NACHT

Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen;
Tod und Verzweiflung tobten um mich her,

Fühlt nicht durch dich Sarastro Todesschmerzen,
Bist du mein Kind, bist mir nicht Tochter mehr.

Verstossen sey auf ewig! Verlassen sey auf ewig!
Zertrümmert sey auf ewig alle Bande der Natur,

Wenn nicht durch dich Sarastro wird erblassen!
Hört! Rachegötter! Hört! der Mutter Schwur!

QUEEN OF NIGHT

The vengeance of hell boils in my heart;
Death and despair rage around me,

If Sarastro doesn't feel through you the pains of death
You are my child, my daughter no more.

Be cast off forever! Be deserted forever!
All ties of nature be destroyed forever,

If, through you, Sarastro is not rendered lifeless!
Hear! Gods of vengeance! Hear! a mother's oath!

Tod und Verzweiflung
flammet um mich her!

So bist du, Nein! meine
Tochter nimmermehr:

Zertrümmert seyn auf ewig
alle Bande der Natur,

Death and despair burns
around me!

So you are, no! my daughter
nevermore:

All ties of nature be
destroyed forever,

TYPHO

The character that most resembles Typho in *Die Zauberflöte* is Monostatos, the Moor. Monostatos represents darkness and evil. Monostatos' actions betray that he is a symbol of chaos and destruction. He is deeply devoted to destroying Pamina's purity, and attempts to rape her three times. Sarastro sets things right by punishing him with seventy bastinado stripes on the soles of his feet. Monostatos is so bent on having Pamina that he leaves Sarastro to follow the Queen, because she promises him Pamina in exchange for his help in the destruction of Sarastro.

Typho, also known as Seth, was the murderer of Osiris; according to the mythology he embodied all that was evil in the universe. Von Born states that in their religious education, the ancient people of Egypt were instructed that “Osiris and Isis were the benevolent gods, and Typho was the vicious or bad deity. Every good thing that happened was attributed to Osiris and Isis, and anything bad that one either just feared about, or that did actually happen, was attributed to Typho. With sacrifices, one hoped to win over the good or benevolent gods into one’s camp and render them to be kindly disposed toward you, or to assuage the bad one.”¹⁰⁸

Besides being the destroyer and the embodiment of evil, paradoxically, Typho was also said to make all things right. Typho played a symbolic cosmic role; on him hinged the “rightness” of cosmic order, which is parallel to Schiller’s statement that goodness is conceptually dependent on the existence of evil. It is hard to reconcile such an apparent contradiction; how can the epitome of evil also make all things right? To the Egyptians Typho signified justice in the sense that he was the recipient of punishment, and when he was punished all things were returned to a “right” condition. Von Born relates a ceremony depicting the recovery of the body of Osiris, in which this concept is made apparent:

In the first section I talked about the circumstances of how Osiris was murdered by his brother and his dead body was then cut in to pieces, and how Isis pursues Typho and then was able to reassemble Osiris with the parts that could be recovered in a hurry put him on the banks of the Nile. Isis, together with her companions, was anxiously looking at her husband’s body and then she heard that the coffin had been hung up on a bush and that the bush grew up high and surrounded the coffin and hid it. The dogs of Isis found it in the moonshine and they recovered the precious coffin. This day of remembrance was observed on the 17th day of the month called Athyr. And the days of sorrow and funeral days for Isis to be in that stage was four days and it was during that time that they showed the golden oxen who was symbol of Osiris with black cloths. That is how the common people were shown what was going on. On the 19th of that same month the priests carried a sad but ceremonial procession at night to the holy coast of the Nile River, where they poured water into a golden vessel and called out loud that Osiris was found. With one of these memorial celebrations there was a picture column of one of their gods that got damaged, but Herodotus believed that the old secrecy that had been entrusted to him and could not divulge the name of the god or he would have gone against the secrecy laws. It’s pretty easy to

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 36.

guess that it was the picture of Typho that the priests had damaged with blows, in order to have revenge because of the murdering of Osiris.¹⁰⁹

The revenge deemed necessary in order to reset the balance of the universe was typified by the priests' doling out damaging blows to the effigy of Typho.

Discussing the Egyptian use of sacrifice in religious rites, Jan N. Bremmer reiterates this concept:

What scholars of Egyptian religion tend to call an offering is usually not so much something presented by people to the gods but rather a ritual act by which men can contribute to the restoration or maintenance of cosmic harmony in the world. An offering in Egypt, therefore, is not so much an offering to a god as an offering of the god...It is well known that life and death or death and resurrection are important themes in Egyptian religion, for example the death and resurrection of Osiris, and even the rising and setting of the sun god. The death of Osiris, and particularly the killing of Osiris, is never directly but only indirectly celebrated – it is as if it was too awful and too cosmic-order shattering to be celebrated in ritual. What does happen is that the killer or murderer is killed during the ritual. As early as in the pyramids from the third millennium BC it can be read that when sacrificing a bull, the following words are recited to Osiris or to the deceased pharaoh who has become the deceased and resurrected Osiris: 'I have killed for you the one who killed you.' That mythical murderer or killer is the god Seth, who by his murderous deed has introduced death into the world and disrupted the cosmic order, and who must be killed in his turn in the ritual so that the disturbed cosmic order can be re-established and balance achieved again.¹¹⁰

The above statement that Seth (Typho) "must be killed in his turn in the ritual so that the disturbed cosmic order can be re-established and balance achieved again" is one of the central tenets of the wisdom contained in the Mysteries.

Furthermore, the above quote contains a striking parallel to a statement by Hornblower in which he says, "the Rites proclaim that the 'greatest affair of the State is the marriage of the Prince;' on it depends the order of the world and 'of society; the universe is at once deranged if 'the union between king and queen becomes 'imperfect.'" ¹¹¹ From these two statements it would appear that both the capital punishment of Seth and the marriage of the Prince must take place in order for balance, cosmic order to be reinstated. This shall be explored further on.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 123.

¹¹⁰ Jan N. Bremmer, *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2007), 128.

¹¹¹ G. D. Hornblower, "The Egyptian Fertility-Rite," *Man* 43 (1943): 30.

Typho was also imbued with pride and said to be “an enemy and a scoffer of wisdom and truth.” Von Born states that “he put up obstacles in the real scientific research.” In other words, he worked to hinder the priests and the consecrated from approaching wisdom and truth and the research in the true and genuine sciences. Typho was also characterized as a destroyer: “the fire that destroyed everything was the property and characteristic of Typho.”¹¹²

If Monostatos represents Typho, the epitome of evil, then his punishment at the end of the opera, where he sinks into the earth and is obliterated, would make the universe right again. It is obvious that Mozart chose not to follow the myth to the letter, for the Queen, who represents Isis, is also punished by death, which the Egyptian myth does not support.

¹¹² Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 118.

COMMON ELEMENTS BETWEEN EGYPT AND *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*

There are several elements in the *Die Zauberflöte* that can be traced to ancient Egyptian mysticism:

- Deities and Supernatural Good and Evil Guiding Spirits
- The Snake
- Morality – Maat, the Law of Opposing Forces
- Priests and Temples
- The Vow of Silence
- Rituals of Initiation by Fire and Water
- The Sacred Marriage of the Prince
- Nature/Magic
- The Flute/Music
- Sacrifice

These elements are central, and are embedded in the opera in allegorical clothing. They have significant meanings which are clear only to the initiated or to someone who would care to delve into the occult.

DEITIES AND SUPERNATURAL GOOD AND EVIL GUIDING SPIRITS

The deities in *Die Zauberflöte* are Isis and Osiris. This is first revealed to the audience at the beginning of Act 2, as Sarastro addresses the initiates: “Initiates of the Temple of Wisdom in the service of the great gods Isis and Osiris!” The first aria in the same act is Sarastro’s, who sings his well-known aria in F to this Egyptian godhead, interceding for Tamino and Pamina: “Oh Isis and Osiris grant the spirit of wisdom to the new pair!” In the opera, Typho is not portrayed as being part of the godhead, even though he is part of the plot in the person of Monostatos. Monostatos, whose name, mono=one, statos=state, indicates his single-minded character of evil.

Plutarch’s *Of Isis and Osiris* discusses the Isis/Osiris/Typho godhead. He declares that the deities, including Isis and Osiris, were not human nor Gods, but rather, they were either good or evil “grand Daemons:”

Typhon, Osiris, and Isis were not the events of Gods, nor yet of men, but of certain grand Daemons, whom Plato, Pythagoras, Zenocrates, and Chrysippus (following herein the opinion of the most ancient theologists) affirm to be of greater strength than men, and to transcend our nature by much in power, but not to have a divine part pure and unmixed...For there are divers degrees, both of virtue and vice, as among men, so also among Daemons...Empedocles saith also that Daemons undergo severe punishments for their evil deeds and misdemeanors...¹¹³

Plutarch indicates that Daemons can be either good or bad. For that reason they do not have “a divine part pure and unmixed.” A “part pure and unmixed” belongs to the Monad. Like humans, Daemons have “divers degrees, both of virtue and vice;” thus, they operate by the Dyad. Jamblicus attests to this, and adds that some Daemons were controlled for good ends by the priests, and some for evil ends by the magicians: “*theurgists* controlled good spirits for good ends whereas magicians employed bad spirits for bad purposes,” (De Mysteriis, III: 3, 1).¹¹⁴

Theurgie, practiced in ancient Egypt, was “the operation or effect of a supernatural or divine agency in human affairs.”¹¹⁵ Theurgie, more plainly stated, was the union of human beings with supernatural beings. Such a union with the gods is the purpose of all mysticism, ancient or modern. Von Born states that Herodotus claimed that the priests received messages from the spirits whom they called gods, stating that the gods talked to them in dreams.

The concept revealed by Plutarch and Jamblicus that there are good as well as evil spirits appears to defy the conventional opinion that all daemons are evil. Their goodness and evilness, however, belong within the context of the law of contrary forces. The issue of duality is brought up by Homer, who assigns these Daemons even numbers. As even numbers can be divided, it indicates that they are not inherently moved by a unitary single principle, but by a principle that is bifurcated into two opposing forces.

To solve the paradox regarding the existence of good and evil daemons, one ultimately has to contrast the dual-acting spirits against what the ancients called the divine, the Olympian

¹¹³ William Watson Goodwin, *Plutarch's lives, vol. 4* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1874), 86-87.

¹¹⁴ "theurgy". Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. Oxford University Press.

<http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/offcampus.lib.washington.edu/definition/theurgy?region=us> [Accessed March 09, 2012].

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Gods. They were represented by the Monad, “dexter things and odd numbers,” which cannot be split into two opposites. Von Born also confirms that there are “evil minded and good minded gods.” Plutarch also states that Daemons “undergo severe punishments” themselves, applying the moral law of order to themselves as well.

The gods of Egypt, who directly relayed the laws to the priests, were characterized by whether they were good or evil and were taught as such: “In religious instruction Osiris and Isis were the benevolent gods, and Typho was the vicious or bad deity. Every good thing that happened was attributed to Osiris and Isis, and everything that one feared, whether it had happened or not, was attributed to Typho. Sacrifices were used to win the favor of the benevolent gods or in order to assuage the bad god.”¹¹⁶

Plutarch confirms that the law of contrary forces was embodied in the persons of Osiris and Typho:

For the frame and constitution of this world is made up of contrary powers, but yet such as are not of such equal strength but that the better is still predominant. But it is impossible for the ill one to be quite extinguished, because much of it is interwoven with the body and much with the soul of the universe, and it always maintains a fierce combat with the better part. And therefore in the soul, intellect and reason, which is the prince and master of all the best things, is Osiris; and in the earth, in the winds, in the waters, in the heaven, and in the stars, what is range, fixed, and in a sound constitution (as orderly season, due temperament of air, and the revolutions of the stars), is the efflux and appearing image of Osiris. Again, the passionate, Titanic, irrational, and brutal part of the soul is Typhon; and what in the corporeal nature is adventitious, morbid, and tumultuous (as irregular season, distemperatures or air, eclipses of the sun, and disappearing of the moon) is, as it were, the incursions and devastations of Typhon. And the name of Seth, by which they call Typhon, declares as much; for it denotes a domineering and compelling power, and also very often an overturning, and again a leaping over.¹¹⁷

Terrasson confirms Plutarch’s opinion when he says that Osiris was “the benefactor of humanity,” and Typhon was “the mischievous genius or deity, which the Egyptians look’d upon as the instigator of all the crimes of men, and the author of all their evils.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 36.

¹¹⁷ Goodwin, *Plutarch's Lives*, 109-119

¹¹⁸ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, 248, 230.

Just as the Egyptian gods had good or evil natures and were the guiding spirits of humans, in *Die Zauberflöte* there are guiding spirits that are also good and evil. The Three Boys are perceived as being good, and they are employed by Sarastro, the beneficent. The Three Ladies are in the employ of the Queen, and are perceived as being evil. But under close scrutiny, these two sets of spirits are working together, to help Tamino reach his final goal of illumination.

THE SNAKE

Die Zauberflöte opens with Tamino being pursued by a snake. Tamino's desperate cries for help provide the source of his terror: Zu Hülfe! Zu Hülfe! Sonst bin ich verlohren! Der listingen Schlange zum Opfer erkohren (Help! Help! Or else I am lost! Destined to be the victim of the cunning serpent). Tamino enters carrying a bow but he has no arrow.

Von Born states that "in one of the odd deeds of Horus, who is the son of Osiris and Isis, we hear that Typho's concubine Thueris visited Horus with the bad intention of killing him, and to do so she brought along a large snake. The servants of Horus slew the monster. In order to always remember the danger which the son of Isis was in, and according to the witness of Plutarch, among the practices of the Mysteries in the temple they threw in a cord which then was hacked into pieces."¹¹⁹ In *Die Zauberflöte* it is the servants of the Queen of the Night, the Three Ladies, who slay the snake.

In Mozart's story the serpent opens the opera and then retires into the background. It is never mentioned again, but it is significant that it is placed in the forefront of the allegory. The placement of the symbolic serpent in the opening scene makes a bold statement about its importance to the plot.

The fact that Tamino enters the stage running away from a cunning serpent is also an obvious mimicry of the first verses of the Torah, which recount the fall of man, showing that the creators of the opera were aware of the role of the serpent in one of the earliest narratives about

¹¹⁹ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 106.

the history of the world. The opera opens with Tamino's pursuit by the "Listig" (cunning) snake, just as the Torah begins with Adam and Eve being "pursued," conversationally, by a snake. The connection is made obvious by the fact that both opera and Torah indicate that this creature is "cunning:" "And the serpent was cunning above every animal of the field which Jehovah God had made."¹²⁰

The serpent has been an icon of evil, destruction and terror in many of the world's cultures, and Egypt is a primary example. Egyptians ascribed responsibility for the existence of evil partly to human beings and partly to various gods, including *Iaau*, *Seth*, *Isfet*, *Osiris*, *Geb*, *Shu*, plus genii and demons. An analysis of various Egyptian texts by Egyptologist Mpay Kemboly explains:

Human beings are not fully responsible for all the evil in the world and that, with the exception of the creator, the gods as a whole – not just Seth – have without discrimination their share in bringing about evil in the created world. The two categories of protagonists, that is, humans and the gods, do not, however, exhaust the mystery of the responsibility for evil in the world. Egyptian sources do often mention other beings – genii or demons – that are held answerable for that aspect of evil, for which neither humans nor the gods are responsible.¹²¹

Kemboly states that "Apopis stands alone as the chief character among those special beings."¹²² He then adds:

[*Apopis*] is often represented as a giant snake with various names, such as *imy whm=f*, *w3mmty*, *jmjmty*, or *nik*, and with various epithets such as "the evil one" (*dw*) or "the one of evil character" (*dw qd*). The meaning of the name 'Apopis' (*3pp*) is unclear. Nonetheless, some authors connect the name to the Coptic term λφωφ, which means 'giant', and others to the verb 'to fly' (*py*) or 'to spit' (*p'y*).¹²³

It is curious that Apopis is connected to the verb "to fly," which appears to indicate that the serpent is a flying snake, a dragon, a bird of sorts. Apopis is also depicted as the archenemy of the sun god *Re*: "Apopis is chiefly portrayed as the foe of Re, that is, as one who opposes (*hfty*) the sun god or one who rebelled (*sbi*) against the divine order. He is the opponent of the lord of

¹²⁰ Genesis 3:1, KJV.

¹²¹ Kemboly, *The Question of Evil*, 244.

¹²² Ibid. 244.

¹²³ Ibid., 245.

all,”¹²⁴ and “he perpetrates violence against the sun god. As a result, a fierce battle breaks out between the sun god and his crew, and Apopis. The solar god suffers in Apopis’ hands.”¹²⁵

This text provides some interesting clues as to the reason for Apopis’ rebellion but it raises some questions as well. The text states that Apopis rebelled against “divine order.” What was divine order according to the ancient philosophers? And if Apopis rebelled against divine order, did he come up with a new system of order to replace the one he thought was insufficient? As stated earlier, divine order was represented by the Monad. In that context, what was the new order Apopis instated?

Mpay Kemboly shows that in the *Book of the Gates*, “Apopis is represented as a giant snake,” and various labels are given to him: “the rebel’ (*sbi*), ‘evil one’ (*iwf dw*), and ‘the foe of Re’ (*hfty R*).”¹²⁶ Other epithets addressed to Apopis are “evil snake’ (*hf3w dw*) and “the one of evil glance/face (*dw hr*).”¹²⁷

Another serpent in Egyptian mythology, one connected with magic and alchemy, is *Ouroboros*. *Ouroboros* is the serpent that endlessly eats its own tail. *Ouroboros* is continually attempting to regenerate itself through chemical transmutation, seeking the key to unending energy, or in other words, eternal life. Thus, its connection with magic and alchemy implies an effort at defeating the pull toward destruction and death, the opposite of infinity, which in other words is eternal life.

Ouroboros was also referred to as the “Many-faced” one, a description that appears to suggest the serpent’s dual quality of good and evil. Erik Hornung states:

Among the purely symbolic signs, the symbol of the ouroboros, the serpent biting its own tail (called in Egyptian simply “Tail-in mouth”), was not used as hieroglyph, but it would have a tremendously rich career. An important predecessor of the symbol was the serpent “Many-faced,” which in the *Amduat*, the oldest *Book of the Afterlife*, coils itself protectively around the corpse of the sun god and displays five heads that touch its tail. The “true” ouroboros first occurs on the gilded shrines of Tutankhamun, and later, especially in the

¹²⁴ Ibid., 248.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 257.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 262.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 264.

evidence for magic. In alchemy, the serpent became a dragon, and the well-known image in the Codex Marcianus of the eleventh century, now in Venice, was a constantly reproduced example. Rich use was also made of this symbol in Graeco-Roman magic, in Gnosticism, and in Hermetism.¹²⁸

The “Many-faced” serpent here described parallels the Pythagoreans’ belief that “all that was double-faced or false was called binary.”¹²⁹ The binary, the system of duality, employs both good and evil, reward and punishment, in the effort to implement order and harmony in the universe. It is a law of contrary forces, the law with which the symbolic snake sought to replace the divine order.

MORALITY – MAAT, THE LAW OF OPPOSING FORCES

Sarastro, the enforcer of order through the law of opposing forces, is a wise sage who rewards and punishes all within the same orbit. When at the beginning of Act II Sarastro introduces Tamino as a possible candidate for the order, he discloses that the reason for the Tamino’s entrance into the order is so the young hero can perpetuate the double principle. Thus, he exhorts the priests: “Diesen Tugendhaften zu bewachen, ihm freundschaftlich die Hand zu bieten, sei heute eine unserer wichtigsten Pflichten” (Today let it be one of our most pressing duties to watch over this virtuous man and to offer him the hand of friendship). Three Priests rise and ask:

ERSTER PRIESTER
Er besitzt Tugend?

SARASTRO
Tugend!

ZWEITER PRIESTER
Auch Verschwiegenheit?

SARASTRO
Verschwiegenheit!

¹²⁸ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 13.

¹²⁹ Behari, *Esoteric Principles*, 266.

DRITTER PRIESTER
Ist wohlthätig?

SARASTRO
Wohlthätig! – Haltet ihr ihn für würdig, so folgt meinem Beispiele.
Die Priester blasen dreimal in die Hörner

SARASTRO
Gerührt über die Einigkeit eu'rer Herzen, dankt Sarastro euch im Namen der Menschheit. – Pamina, das sanfte, tugendhafte Mädchen, haben die Götter dem holden Jünglinge bestimmt; dies ist der Grund, warum ich sie der stolzen Mutter entriss. – Das Weib dünkt sich gross zu sein, hofft durch Blendwerk und Aberglauben das Volk zu berücken und unser'n Tempelbau zu zerstören. Allein, das soll sie nicht! Tamino, der holde Jüngling selbst, soll ihn mit uns befestigen und als Eingeweihter der Tugend Lohn, dem Laster aber Strafe sein.

FIRST PRIEST
Is this man virtuous?

SARASTRO
He is

SECOND PRIEST
Can he keep silent?

SARASTRO
He can

THIRD PRIEST
Is he charitable?

SARASTRO
He is. – If you consider him worthy, then follow my example.

They blow the horn three times

SARASTRO
Touched by the unanimous support of your hearts, Sarastro thanks you in the name of humanity. Prejudice may always censure us, the Initiates, but wisdom and reason will sweep away prejudice like a spider web. They will never shake the pillars of our temple. Evil prejudice will vanish once Tamino himself fully grasps the grandeur of our demanding art. – The gods have destined Pamina, the gentle, virtuous maiden, for Tamino; and this is the reason why I took her away from her proud mother. That woman thinks herself powerful. Through deceit and superstition, she hopes to win the people's support and seeks to destroy our temple. But she shall not do so. Tamino, the noble youth, shall help us to defend it, as an Initiate, rewarding virtue and punishing vice.

Sarastro discloses that the events taking place in the opera are god-ordained, including his abduction of Pamina, because “the gods have destined” her for Tamino; “this is the reason why I

took her away from her proud mother.” Tamino’s entrance into the Temple of Wisdom is of such significance that it affects all humanity, for Sarastro thanks the priests in the name of humanity for accepting him. Before Tamino can be accepted, the priests make sure he is virtuous and charitable, and that he can keep silence. Tamino will be primed to rule as Prince through the moral law of opposing forces.

Von Born states that Egypt thrived because of its wisest of laws:

“The wellness, the well-being of the country kept thriving, growing daily because it was guided through the wisest of laws, it was governed by noblemen who belonged to the same order that focused on the principle of purity in customs which required one to be always doing what was beneficial to others, having always in mind what was best for their country and their countrymen. These noblemen were also members of the priesthood, and therefore also keepers of the secrets, and their undivided interest was in seeking the best that religion and government could achieve.”¹³⁰

The totalitarian society he describes was ruled by “a code of rules and punishments, a regulatory codex in which the highest level of human criminal behavior was breaking oaths and murdering one’s father. They had a census. Everyone had to demonstrate how they were gainfully employed. In order to combat epidemics, they had dietary rules and regulations and prescribed medicines that were to be taken. Storehouses were built in each district into which certain allowed and approved foods were stored. Even the funerary ceremonies were dictated by laws, based on the wealth of the deceased.”¹³¹

The conjoining of morality and mysticism begs for clarity and definition. Morality is characterized as the “principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior,” and mysticism as “the belief that union with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute, or the spiritual apprehension of knowledge inaccessible to the intellect, may be attained through contemplation and self-surrender,” and as “a vague or ill-defined religious or spiritual belief, especially as associated with a belief in the occult.”¹³² Thus, if these definitions

¹³⁰ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 33.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹³² “morality”. Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. Oxford University Press. <http://english.oxforddictionaries.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/definition/morality?region=us> (Accessed

are accurate it would appear that the morality contained in the Mysteries is a morality derived from a “union with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute” with roots in the occult.

In its turn, occult is defined as “supernatural, mystical, or magical beliefs, practices, or phenomena,” and the word “occult” itself refers to things hidden, things kept veiled.¹³³ These definitions imply that the secret wisdom or morality of the mystics came from a union with the deities. It is apparent that Mozart’s opera was inspired by the morality of Egypt’s occult deities. Ignaz Von Born states that “Egyptians believed in a good and in a bad principle. They had a good versus an evil principle which governed the world. They assumed that this principle existed, and that these two were the main players that ruled or governed the earth. They assumed that the water that kept everything damp and was necessary for things to grow flowed from the benevolent Osiris, and the fire that destroyed everything were the property and characteristic of Typhon.”¹³⁴

This moral law of contrary forces, as well as magic and alchemy, was first communicated to the priests through Hermes, the messenger of the gods. According to the principle of Hermes there are only two elements, represented by symbols: a working and very active fire (evil) and a very passive or suffering earth (good). To the Egyptians, the closeness of this principle to humanity was represented by Vulcan, the god who was perceived as the fire that completed the human nature.

In Egypt, morality and justice became embodied in a system of law which contained the mechanism of reward and punishment toward virtue and vice. Virtue, being the highest ideal, was rewarded in various ways, the most crucial of all being the promise of an eternal life face to face with the gods. Likewise, a life of vice would be punished by the second death, or

March 09, 2012). "mysticism". Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. <http://oxforddictionaries.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/definition/mysticism> [Accessed February 22, 2012].

¹³³ "occult". Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries Pro. April 2010. Oxford University Press. <http://english.oxforddictionaries.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/definition/occult?region=us> (Accessed March 13, 2012).

¹³⁴ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 118.

nonexistence. This moral law was not only considered by them as the highest possible wisdom, but it was also considered to be the divine law of life and cosmic order, truth and justice, harmony and balance between light and darkness.

Juridical balance was typified by the ritual murder of Typho (Seth) for the crime of killing Osiris. In order to bring the cosmos back into balance, for justice to be served, Typho the murderer, needed to be murdered. The moral principle of opposing forces, in which good behavior is rewarded and evil behavior is punished, was at the core of the Mysteries and was called *Maat*. *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* depicts Isis, Nature, and *Maat* as being connected:

In Egyptian mythology, the goddess Maat (Ua Zit), the wife of Thoth, a god associated with wisdom, and daughter or aspect of the high god Atum, is at once a goddess and an idea, the personification of moral and cosmic order, truth, and justice (*maat* or *mayet*, like the Mesopotamian *me* or Indian *dharma*) that was as basic to life as breath itself, which in the Coffin Texts Maat also seems to personify. Pharaohs held small models of Maat to signify their association with her attributes. Maat gives breath itself – life – to the kings, and so is depicted holding the symbol of life, the *ankh*, to their noses. Maat represents the proper relationship between the cosmic and the earthly, the divine and the human, the earth, the heavens, and the underworld. It is she who personifies the meaningful order of life as opposed to the entropic chaos into which it might easily fall. In some stories it is the sun god Re who displaces Chaos with Maat. When a person died his heart was weighed against Maat's feather. A heart 'heavy with sin' would not join the gods. Maat was essentially in all Egyptian gods and goddesses as the principle of divinity itself. The goddess Isis acknowledges the qualities of Maat, as signified by the *maat* (ostrich feather) she wears behind the crowns of upper and Lower Egypt. Maat might be seen as a principle analogous to the Logos, divine reason and order. As Christians are told 'In the beginning the Word [*Logos*] already was' (John 1:1), Atum announces that before creation, "when the heavens were asleep, my daughter Maat lived within me and around me."¹³⁵

The above quote reveals that *Maat* is above all a moral law that brings cosmic order and justice. The word "order" is significant in this context, for that is the ultimate purpose of this law: to enforce "order" through either reward or punishment. The priesthood was expected to live by such order. From this concept came the different Orders of priesthood.

¹³⁵ David Adams Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243.

The extent of this law's hold on the Egyptian priesthood was such that, according to Von Born, the priests documented in the "secret register of the virtues and vices" not just the noble and un-noble deeds of the higher classes and nobility, but their intentions as well.¹³⁶ This documentation was supervised by the high priests, and as such it was considered reliable and truthful. Upon one's death, his/her record would be read and decisions would be made according to merit or demerit in regard to the deceased's eternal future. The outcome of this judgment would determine whether they would join the gods or perish in the second death.

The high priests were responsible for deciding whether their virtues outweighed their vices. Von Born states that "the philosophy that good and evil minded persons would, after this life, face either punishment or reward, was introduced to the peoples under the teaching of the soul's wondering, or the immortality of the soul."¹³⁷ Additionally, "they taught the people that just as in former times the souls of kings had been transplanted into the stars of the constellations, in the same manner the souls of men, according to their merit, would inherit the bodies of good or evil animals, and they would be wondering about in those animal bodies."¹³⁸

Like von Born, Erik Hornung claims that Egypt was a country in which there existed "just and wise laws." This is no doubt again a reference to *Maat*, which the Egyptians believed to be the creative law of the universe. *Maat* was often referred to as the Creator's law of order and life.

Egyptologist Maulana Karenga's definition of *Maat* points out that it had taken control of all aspects of earthly life:

Maat is right order, divinely established order and as such is 'the Egyptian concept of the arrangement and relationship that underlies and governs all aspects of existence, somewhat akin to the western notion of natural law' (Allen 1988, 26). Moreover, '[i]t extends from the elements of nature...into the moral and social behavior of mankind.' *Maat* as 'order is the principle which makes the

¹³⁶ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 20.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 60.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

whole of existence possible.’ At the same time, it is a life-generating principle and force.¹³⁹

Karenga emphasizes the extent of *Maat*’s grip on Egyptian consciousness:

Maat, as a principle and force constitutive of creation itself, comes to mean, then, an order of rightness which permeates existence and gives life. Thus, Siegfried Morenz (1984, 113) states, ‘Maat is right order in nature and society, as established by the act of creation and hence means according to context, what is right, what is correct, law, order, justice and truth.’ Anthes (1954, 23) also stresses the centrality of Maat as a divinely constituted order. He observes that ‘[the] idea of Maat primarily means the divine order of the world, including the political, theological and social order of Egypt.’¹⁴⁰

The above quote shows the extent of this law’s influence when it states that political, theological and social orders of the world, not just Egypt, all operate by *Maat*. *Maat* is chiefly concerned with order, law, justice, truth, what is right, what is correct. *Maat* is also characterized by an intrinsic opposing duality such as good and evil: “Maat was not an abstraction for the Egyptians but an actual order resulting from opposing powers.”¹⁴¹

Describing the Egyptian Hall of Double Righteousness (double righteousness being no doubt an allusion to the opposing forces of *Maat*) where the judgment of the dead took place, Anthony Holmes describes *Maat* as the ideal balance that allows the universe to function, and he explicitly identifies the two opposing forces as being good and evil:

A feeling of rightness pervades the Hall! The concept of divine balance flows from the Complete One. Justice and Order are the watchwords that Atum must maintain. Atum has appointed his daughter, the Goddess Maat to be the personification of this wonderful concept of balance in the universe. A feather, a simple plume, is her symbol. With the lightest touch Maat controls the balance between opposing forces of good and evil to the finest degree. No individual human strength or weakness dominates for very long. The Goddess applies her feather-light touch to restore divine justice and order in the Ancient land.¹⁴²

Moustafa Gadalla connects this law of opposing principles with Isis and Osiris, confirming that they represent the principle of duality in the universe:

¹³⁹ Maulana Karenga, *Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 8.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Anna Mancini, *Maat Revealed, Philosophy of Justice in Ancient Egypt* (Buenos Books America, 2004), 13. [Accessed January 15, 2012]

http://books.google.com/books/about/Maat_Revealed_Philosophy_of_Justice_in_A.html?id=uR_pa92JT-8C

¹⁴² Anthony Holmes, *Tutankhamun-Speak My Name* (Victoria, B.C: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 8.

All ancient Egyptian cosmic stories are embedded with the society's social framework. In other words, the society must conduct its practices in accordance with the same cosmic principle embedded in these stories. The most common story to all Egyptians was that of Ausar (Osiris) and his family. There is not a single complete Egyptian record of it, in all the recovered archeological findings. Our knowledge of this Model Story comes from several versions that were written by the early Greek and Roman writers. The most common was the one told by Plutarch. A shortened version of the story of the Egyptian role model goes as follows: The self-created neter (god) Atum spat out the twins Shu and Tefnut, who in turn gave birth to Nut (the sky) and Geb (the earth/matter). The union of Nut and Geb produced four descendants: Ausar (Osiris), Auset (Isis), Set (Seth), and Nebt-het (Nephthys). The story goes that Ausar (Osiris) married Auset (Isis), and Set (Seth) married Nebt-het (Nephthys). Ausar (Osiris) became King of the land (Egypt) after marrying Auset (Isis). The story sets the basis for the matrilineal/matriarchal society. Auset (Isis) is the legal heiress. Ausar (Osiris) and Auset (Isis) represent the principle of duality in the universe. With Ausar and Auset, there is a harmonious polarity: brother and sister, twin souls, husband and wife.¹⁴³

From Ausar (Osiris) and Auset (Isis) one can draw a parallel to *Die Zauberflöte*. Sarastro and the Queen, two polar opposites, offer the possibility of being a new incarnation of the representation of the “principle of duality in the universe.”

Simson Najovits declares that *Maat* is a moral principle, “an implicit moral code for this life:”

While the maat precepts, ankh-em-maat, ‘living by maat,’ primarily meant respecting the primeval order of the universe and of society, at least from the time of the Wisdom Texts (c.2550 BC), they could also be understood as living decently, as ‘doing the ethical thing.’ As such, it put the ethical justification for a Paradise into the hands of the Egyptians. It even put the link between everyday life, ethics and religion into their hands, since much in the maat was an implicit moral code for this life and not just a criterion for universal and societal order and entry into the afterlife. The ethical aspects of the maat in the negative confession in ‘The Hall of Two Truths’ constituted a moral system, or rather it would have constituted such a system if was not assumed that the afterlife assessors could be tricked by claiming innocence of all wrongdoing and that magic and fraud were the omnipotent passport to the afterlife.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Moustafa Gadalla, *Egyptian Divinities: The All Who Are the One* (Greensborough: Tehuti Research Foundation, 2003), 25.

¹⁴⁴ Simson Najovits, *Egypt, Trunk of the Tree*, vol. 2 (Algora Publishing, 2004), 42.

Najovits goes on to say that through the concept of *Maat*, the Egyptians “posed some of the most fundamental problems faced by man – what is correct behavior? What is ethics? Is there a reward or a punishment?”¹⁴⁵

Karenga says that “the oldest source of the category of *Maat* as a moral concept and practice is the Pyramid Texts.”¹⁴⁶ Since Egyptians believed that their own life was given through *Maat*, “the act of presenting *Maat* returns it to Him who gave it ... the presentation of *Maat* presupposes and requires the doing of *Maat*. The king thus gives life through doing *Maat* and presenting *Maat*, a nourishment which causes the Divinity, the king and the people to live. And this offering, More (1940, 4) reminds us, is ‘not a material offering, but ... a totally spiritual offering.’”¹⁴⁷

The above statement first reveals that it is through the dual principle symbolized by *Maat* that life is given to the people. It further reveals that through “presenting” *Maat*, which is the doing (or living) by the moral law, life is given not only to the king and to the people, but to the very divinities themselves. In one sense then, the lives of the divinities are in the hands of the initiates. Were they to stop giving (living) by *Maat*, the divinities themselves, or at least their power, would cease to exist.

Von Born declares that the most sacred duty of Freemasons, like the ancient Egyptian priests, was to offer *Maat*, in other words, to be keepers of this moral law: “Being subservient towards the king and the laws of the land and being in total awe of the religion and upholding the moral virtues, those were the qualities of the Egyptian priests. Whoever has sinned against these virtues is not entitled to ask to be initiated; that is the same for us as it was for them and you should realize that you must have a good record that shows that you are righteous and that you have the deepest respect for the regent, the ruler, religion, and all virtues. The most avid

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴⁶ Karenga, *Maat, The Moral Ideal*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 304.

protectors of all these virtues are we the Freemasons; that was our original purpose.”¹⁴⁸ By offering *Maat* and promulgating the dual law of opposing forces, Freemasons cause the divinities to live.

Mozart was fond of writing riddles, some of which have survived. Maynard Solomon devoted a chapter of his book to his Zoroastrian riddles, which are fascinating. Solomon recounts an occasion in which “a masquerader cloaked in the robes of an Oriental philosopher proceeded to the Redoutensaal of the Hofburg, where festivities were in progress. There he passed out copies of a broadside sheet containing eight riddles and fourteen proverbs, entitled ‘Excerpts from the Fragments of Zoroaster’ and printed for ‘the edification of the masked ball.’ The masquerader and author was Mozart.”¹⁴⁹

One intriguing riddle touches upon the concept of offering *Maat* mentioned above: “I am an unusual thing [ein sonderbares Ding]; I have no soul and no body; one cannot see me but can hear me; I do not exist for myself: only a human being can give me life, as often as he wishes; and my life is only of short duration, for I die almost at the moment in which I am born. And so, in accordance with men’s caprice, I may live and die untold times a day. To those who give me life I do nothing – but those on whose account I am born I leave with painful sensation for the short duration of my life until I depart. Whatever passions a man finds himself in at the time when he grants me life I will surely bring those along into the world. For the most part, women produce me gently and amiably; many have modestly confessed their love in this way. Many have also saved their virtue through me; in these cases, however, my life can scarcely endure a quarter of an hour. I must come into the world by a singular stroke of fortune: otherwise there is no outlet – the man is deformed.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 90.

¹⁴⁹ Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, 337.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 339.

PRIESTS AND TEMPLES

Sarastro rules in the temple of Wisdom. The priests sing his praises and follow Isis and Osiris. The priests help Sarastro achieve his ends, by indoctrinating and supporting his goals.

Von Born believed that the Egyptian priesthood was the model that Freemasons ought to emulate. He recounts the ascendancy of the priesthood in Egypt: “as the Egyptians grew in wealth, so did their religious ceremonies grow in splendor. Their first sacrifices to their gods were the fruits of the field, which then evolved into a type of bread, then cakes, after which they began to feel that they must offer them something even more precious, and so they began offering animals. Gradually those Egyptians who had dedicated themselves to the service of the gods gained higher standing in society than others. They became intermediaries between the people and the gods, thus developing a hierarchical society. Soon they were organized into guilds and temples ruled by Thoyt and Osiris. They honored the land’s constitution, and the primary purpose of this peculiar priesthood was to be the keepers of the law, administrators, and the recipients of the highest religious secrets, better known as The Mysteries. A system of checks and balances was implemented in order to prevent them from using their powers negatively. Their daily living and duties were to serve the gods and to avail themselves of the wisdoms contained in The Mysteries.”¹⁵¹

There is here a direct line of transference of knowledge from gods to priests, indicating that the moral wisdom of the priests was the same as the moral wisdom of the gods. This wisdom took on a prominent place in Egyptian society. The priests were in charge of not only philosophy but the whole body of knowledge as recorded in the Hermetic books, which were preserved by Clemens of Alexandria.

There are a few deities that were responsible for directly passing on knowledge to the priests. The better known ones were Thoyt, Hermes, and Hermes Trismegistus, the “thrice great, according to Born:”

¹⁵¹ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 47.

Hermes the second, the son of Agathodemon, ranks highly and is worthy to be named. He improved the knowledge of god among the peoples. He discovered the basic principles of arithmetic and geometry, and instead of the symbols that were used previously, he introduced hieroglyphics. He had two columns of stone built, on which he chiseled these newly invented symbols in order to thus engrave and preserve all the knowledge of Egypt for eternity. He had hoped to have these there forever, but then the Nile River broke through the dams, both the artificial and the natural dams, and flooded Egypt. The flood tore down the monuments of stone that had contained the Egyptian wisdoms, and so the arts and sciences lay for a long number of years down, until Hermes Trismegistus appeared on the scene and he collected the spread-out remnants of the former knowledge, found again the key to the hieroglyphics, and improved on that system of writing. Then he trusted all that knowledge to the guild of priests that were entrusted with this holy treasure in the innermost part of the temples. To this restorer, as far as the sciences and the arts are concerned, Egypt owes their position of honor and glory where they found themselves after they had recovered their former glory.¹⁵²

Von Born claims that the knowledge the priests passed on to the Egyptians was always mixed with religion because that was the most powerful way in which they could direct the country and control the peoples.

The priesthood set up and controlled even kings. Kings were chosen from among either the priests or the soldiers, and the sons of the priests kept a strict eye on the kings, watching their every move under the title of advisors. Von Born states:

It was through the dignified care of all their duties, through how they kept the sacred ceremonies, through their virtuous living and behavior, and through their striving for knowledge that they earned the veneration of the peoples. The state took care of their daily needs, and since they didn't have to do anything, they could just pursue more knowledge. Everyone had their own field and everyone possessed the right to 12 measurements of land. These possessions were so considerable that they comprised one third of the land mass of Egypt. They had to come up with everything that was necessary for the service of the gods and the sacrifices out of them. They had soldiers that took care of that for them. The soldiers were considered to be of such high standing that they could become royalty, and so from history they have such examples, like Sethos. All kings, even those that had been raised or elected out of the soldiers, had to be initiated into the Mysteries, and they were instructed by the priests. The initiated into the Mysteries were the trusted counsel of the kings. The oldest sons of the priests, who had to be over twenty years of age, and who had been initiated into the highest secrets, were always around the king in order to shame him not to do something foolish. The sons of the priests were there to give the king counsel but also to keep him from making a fool of himself. As soon as he had awakened at day break, and someone read to him the people's petitions, the king would

¹⁵² Ibid., 32.

cleanse himself through ritual washing, put on his royal attire, and go to the temple to sacrifice to the gods. In a loud voice the high priest called during the sacrifices the blessings of god for the ruler of Egypt, and begged for good health, for good luck and fortune, and spoke an oath or curse that would be detrimental on anyone who would misguide the king to do something unjust. Daily the priests secretly documented all the deeds of the ruler in their yearbooks; then at the time of his death he was judged by the people, in a just judgment, who then determined what was to be done with the now powerless body of their ruler. Out of the ranks in the temples they elected the highest judges; if there was anything that needed to be settled they spoke the right judgment. They were the constant keepers of the rules, the customs, and the mystical ceremonies, which they kept without altering from father to son from one century to another. This was passed on just orally, a record that was passed on in strictest secrecy.¹⁵³

The priests' role was to enforce the laws and to promote the moral law.

THE VOW OF SILENCE

The first trial Tamino undergoes is the vow of silence—to women; he may speak to men, but not to women. Before he embarks on this trial, the priests advise him:

2 PRIESTEN
 Bewahret euch vor Weiber=Tücken,
 Dies ist des Bundes erste Pflicht!
 Manch weiser Mann liess sich berücken,
 Er fehlte und versah sichs nicht.
 Verlassen sah er sich am Ende,
 Vergolten seine Treu mit Hohn!
 Vergebens rang er seine Hände.
 Tod und Verzweiflung war sein Lohn.

2 PRIESTS
 Beware of woman's wiles,
 This is the first duty of the fellowship!
 Many a wise man became ensnared,
 He failed, and was not aware of it.
 In the end he saw himself forsaken,
 His faithfulness repaid with mockery!
 In vain he wrung his hands,
 Death and despair were his reward.

When Tamino is on his way into the dark caves of the earth under the Temple of Wisdom, he is approached by the Queen's three ladies, and by his staunch silence he proves that he has

¹⁵³ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 76.

been duly indoctrinated. Papageno, who has no self-control, fails this trial miserably. The Ladies beseech Tamino and attempt to warn of his upcoming fate, but to no avail. Nothing dissuades him, and he moves ahead unflinchingly. The indoctrination Tamino has undergone is so effective that he rejects the very words that could have saved him from the ordeal that awaits him later on.

The need for secrecy in the Mysteries explains why women are dealt with such contempt in the opera. The treatment of women in *Die Zauberflöte* is disparaging, and much has been written about it. The general attitude here portrayed is that women are not to be trusted. We know that this is not Mozart's natural view of women, for his letters reveal much love and affection for his wife Constanze. But this was the indoctrination of the orders of ancient Egypt as well as of the Freemasons. Tamino's first duty is to keep women out; they must not know any of the secrets shared inside the brotherhood. In that context, one would surmise that women are perceived as a danger and threat.

Von Born states that "Egyptians veiled the Mysteries into complete silence and secrecy."¹⁵⁴ He comments that to this day what took place in the Mysteries was not known, due to "the complete silence of the initiated as to what was being done in the innermost part of the temples, relating to the mystical part of the Mysteries. It is impossible for even our brothers to unveil it."¹⁵⁵ Again, absolute secrecy and silence "was one of the major duties of the initiates."¹⁵⁶ Even the enacting of Osiris' death in the yearly festival that commemorated his death was done through silent mime, because of the priests' code of silence:

The great care with which Theodore and Herodotus, who had both been schooled in the Mysteries, talked about the most insignificant circumstances, might reflect the teachings and customs of the priests, who take great care to cover or avoid speaking of the Mysteries. This proves that swearing the terrible oath which the first priest was commanded to swear into the hands of Isis and of Hermes, to make sure that there would be absolute secrecy, which included watching over death and the graveside of Osiris. The magnitude of this oath was so binding that

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 60.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 86.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 100.

it has been continually passed on to subsequent priests. This secrecy was one of the major duties of the initiates and on a yearly basis, in the last month, called Measure, they were reminded of this with a sacrifice to Harpokrates. In front of his image, who signifies the keeper of secrets, the keeper of silence, peas and beans were offered with the following words: ‘the tongue is a lucky thing; the tongue is an unlucky thing.’ Speech or language is a twofold, two-sided gift from heaven, since it can bring us happiness or it can make us very unhappy. That is why we somewhat press onto the tongue of the newly initiated Freemasons the seal of Solomon, in order to impress on him the most important virtues, so that there is suffering involved when you have this seal pressed on your tongue.¹⁵⁷

Terrasson indicates a compelling motivation for keeping the vow of silence: “in case of violation of the secret, priests, initiates, and secondary officers were condemn’d to a punishment full of horror in its nature, tho’ it might be short enough. It was to rip up their bosoms and tear out their hearts; which were given to be devour’d by birds of prey. It was even forbidden the prophane to ask the secrets of the priesthood; and if by an extraordinary accident they did surprise any, they were under penalty of death, ty’d down to the same secrecy of the priests themselves.”¹⁵⁸ In *Die Zauberflöte* the priests warn Papageno: “Papageno, whoever breaks silence in this place will be punished by the gods with thunder and lightning!”

Von Born says that the Egyptians “believed that the women were unable to achieve the highest knowledge which was kept by the priests, and they doubted definitely that secrets could be kept which were hidden in the pedestal the foot base of the huge colossus onto which the Egyptian priesthood was fastened.”¹⁵⁹ He also says that “the only service that women were allowed to do with the mystics in the Egyptian Mysteries was the insignificant occupation of feeding certain animals that were sacred to the Egyptians, such as beetles, scarabs, certain kind of mice, and other animals.”¹⁶⁰ He goes on to state:

Nonetheless, they had highest respect for women, which is founded in their reference for Isis, the wife of Osiris. The priests only allowed themselves one wife and they did not want to insult their spouse with a rival. Our wise givers of the law removed the beautiful gender from our secrets under a flattery because they were worried that having the sisters would bother the brothers in their work, and

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, 260-261.

¹⁵⁹ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 92.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 93.

they didn't want them to be disturbed. The flattery was that they did not want their beautiful hands to get dirt into such ugly work and since those women were truly pious Egyptian women, they asked to be busy with such things as attaching the bows and ornamentations on the aprons or whatever garments they had as priestly garments and their reward for doing so was to give them beautiful gloves and telling them that each level that the priests attained, they reassured them just as the medieval knights would do, continued fidelity, and that they were working together on this. In other words, they were helping the priests to attain higher levels.¹⁶¹

Why would women be considered a threat to The Mysteries? The most logical conclusion is that in the impersonal realm of law, where law is sovereign, the influence of the heart must be diminished. The heart must be minimized if initiates are to be dehumanized in any way; in this context, a woman could be man's greatest weakness. Women pose the threat of bringing a man to his senses and destroying the work of indoctrination. Thus, they must be silenced. Since that cannot be accomplished in the women themselves, who are "chatterers," then the men must be taught to disregard their "chattering," thereby minimizing their influence. Hence, at the first encounter of Tamino with the priests, this indoctrination begins: "A woman does little, chatters much." In addition, if women are "chatterers" they cannot be trusted with secrets. They would divulge them when given the first opportunity. Thus women are silenced in order to protect the Order's secrecy and as well as to minimize their power.

RITUALS OF INITIATION BY FIRE AND WATER

Before Tamino can reach enlightenment he must pass through rituals of purification. He begins with Papageno, who drops out, and ends with Pamina, who joins him midway. The trials take place in the subterranean vaults of the temple. The first trial is the trial of silence, then fire and water. Von born explains that the "fire" and "water" symbols represented concepts related to dualism:

The profane saw the symbol of the sun and the moon as representations of Osiris and Isis. To the initiated into mystical knowledge, however, it was not just the

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

sun and Osiris. The sun was the highest godhead and was the fountain of everything good, and the moon was the picture of the almighty power of the creator. Not only for the initiated was the sun symbolically the highest godhead and the originator of everything good, and the moon the image of the almighty power of the creator, but even more frequently the sign of the sun referred to spirit and to everything fiery, whereas the sign of the moon was to be interpreted as water and earth.¹⁶²

The mystical inner core of Egyptian mysticism was performed in the inner part of the temple and culminated in the holy of holies. Whatever transpired in The Mysteries were kept in strictest secrecy by the temple priests. From various sources we can gather that they involved first the purification trials, which appear to have involved a near-death experience, and then a literal encounter face to face with the gods.

Von Born claims that it impossible for even the most perceptive and brightest to solve the puzzle of the Mysteries and to get to its most holy part, for they were passed on from father to son and were not to be disclosed to the general public. But there is enough evidence to prove that they were rituals of initiation, where the initiate came into the inner places of the temple, “the secret places of the netherworld,” in the presence of the deities themselves.

There is one account of the Mysteries which is used by all historians. Lucius Apuleius’ personal testimony of his own induction into the Mysteries is widely quoted. In *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius gives a general description, for he is not allowed to disclose any more than that, of the rituals he experiences on the occasion of his own initiation. The brief narrative is found in the eleventh and final chapter:

Then behold the day approached, when as the sacrifice should be done, and when night came there arrived on every coast, a great multitude of Priests, who according to their order offered me many presents and gifts: then was all the Laity and prophane people commanded to depart, and when they had put on my back a linen robe, they brought me to the most secret and sacred place of all the temple. You would peradventure demand (you studious reader) what was said and done there, verily I would tell you if it were lawful for me to tell, you should know if it were convenient for you to heare, but both thy eares, and my tongue shall incur the like paine of rash curiositie: Howbeit, I will content thy mind for this present time, which peradventure is somewhat religious and given to some devotion, listen therefore and believe it to be true: Thou shallt understand that I

¹⁶² Ibid., 63.

approached neere unto Hell, even to the gates of Proserpina, and after that I was ravished throughout all the Element, I returned to my proper place: About midnight I saw the Sun shine, I saw likewise the gods celestiall and gods infernall, before whom I presented my selfe, and worshipped them: Behold now I have told thee, which although thou hast heard, yet it is necessarie thou conceale it; this have I declared without offence, for the understanding of the prophane.¹⁶³

Apuleius saw the sun shine at midnight, as well as “Celestial” and “Infernal” gods. By such a statement he substantiates Plutarch’s assertion that “there are divers degrees, both of virtue and vice, as among men, so also among Daemons.” During his initiation Apuleius recounts that he saw these good and evil beings, and that he worshipped them. His account also describes a preliminary ritual, not included here, and a statement about the initiation ceremony itself: “it is an experience of entering the realm of darkness and death and emerging the next morning as the sun, reborn for a new day.”¹⁶⁴ This is also the insinuation found in the Priest’s chorus at the beginning of the second act of *Die Zauberflöte*:

CHOR DER PRIESTER

O Isis! und Osiris! welche Wonne!
Die düstre Nacht verscheucht der Glanz der Sonne.
Bald fühlt der edle Jüngling neues Leben;
Bald ist er unserm Dienste ganz gegeben.
Sein Geist ist kühn, sein Herz ist rein.
Bald wird er unsrer würdig seyn.

PRIESTS’ CHORUS

Oh Isis! and Osiris! what rapture!
The brightness of the sun drives away the shades of
night.
Soon the noble youth will feel new life;
Soon he will be fully given over to our service.
His spirit is bold, his heart is pure.
Soon he will be worthy of us.

How does one enter the realm of darkness and death? Does this description refer to a symbolic death or to a sacrifice, or to a near-death experience? Could the secrecy of these rituals and the nature of the myths therein enacted raise the possibility that human sacrifice was a

¹⁶³ Lucius Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* (Teddington: The Echo Library, 2005), 153-154.

¹⁶⁴ Marvin W. Meyer, ed., *The Ancient Mysteries, A Sourcebook of Sacred Texts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 176.

component of the Mysteries? Commenting on Apuleius' initiation, Egyptologist Jan Assmann states:

“Initiation thus clearly had the sense of a prefiguration of death, one that conveyed to the mystic a divine presence that otherwise, according to the Egyptian view of things, was imparted only to the ritually ‘transfigured’ dead. By voluntarily experiencing this symbolic death, the mystic qualified himself to be brought back to life by Isis on the day of his actual death.”¹⁶⁵

That initiation rituals were connected to death in some way is further confirmed in the following comments by Erik Hornung:

A mystical initiation ritual is assured for the Isis Mysteries of the Hellenistic era, and there were even three degrees of initiation. Apuleius is our most important source for these matters (though as an initiate, he was actually not supposed to reveal anything!), and his account in Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses* had a profound effect on lore regarding Mysteries in all succeeding periods. After experiencing a symbolic death, initiates would confront the gods and pass through all the elements. The decisive mystery was that of the sun at midnight, which they had to behold, and which conveyed the certainty of overcoming death. Related concepts occur in Greek magical texts from Egypt, which aim at achieving an encounter with divine and the overcoming of fate. In this initiation, we find ourselves reminded of the nightly journey of the sun in the Egyptian Books of the Netherworld, wherein, at midnight, the sun completes its renewal, the rekindling of the light that will be born, ‘on the arms of darkness.’¹⁶⁶

The “decisive mystery was that of the sun at midnight, which they had to behold, and which conveyed the certainty of overcoming death.” This explains the stage directions for the last scene of *The Magic Flute*, where “suddenly the whole scene is transformed into a blaze of sunlight.”¹⁶⁷ It also explains the last words of the opera which describe the couple as “pushing” through the night, that is, through death:

(The Temple of the Sun. Sarastro stands on high. Tamino and Pamina are dressed in priestly garments before him. The Priests and the Tree Spirits stand by them)

CHOR

Heil sey euch Geweihten!
Ihr drangt durch die Nacht.

Ihr dranget durch Nacht!

¹⁶⁵ Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 205.

¹⁶⁶ Hornung, *The Secret Lore of Egypt*, 14.

¹⁶⁷ Davide Pizzigoni, *The Magic Flute* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2000), 191.

Dank sey dir Osiris. Dank, dir Isis gebracht.
Es siegte die Wahrheit, in himmlischem Glanz

Strahlt Wahrheit und Liebe dein ewiger Kranz.

CHORUS

Hail to you, the initiated!
You forged your way through the night.

Thanks be given to you, Isis and Osiris.
Truth triumphed, in heavenly brightness

Your eternal garland streams truth and love.

Es siegte die Stärke und
krönet zum Lohn
Die Schönheit und Weisheit
mit ewiger Kron!

You forged your way
through night!

Strength triumphed and
crowns, as the reward
Beauty and wisdom with an
eternal crown!

In *Sethos*, Terrasson intimates that the purpose of the Mysteries was to imprint eternally in the mind of the initiate “those maxims which they [the gods] themselves have inspired in him.”¹⁶⁸ Terrasson describes a ritual punishment inflicted on murderers, a ritual which could also be voluntarily undertaken by initiates, which could cause just such a near death experience as the one described by Apuleius:

The next morning at break of day, the priests of the expiation, attended several officers of the second order, went to fetch the Carthaginian out of his prison; in which was a door that opened to the subterranean canal, which the candidates must pass in their trials for the initiation. This door was near the water-fall, above the bars through which the water entered into that canal. This door they opened on the inside for him to go out. Both sides of the water were made light by means of torches, and discovered to his eyes a frightful preparation of machines, and of people appointed to manage them. On the bank of his side stood a vessel of brass, filled with a thickish liquor; and close by the water, a piece of red-hot iron of the length of the tallest man, and hollowed out in its breadth, which was about three feet, so that it resembled a long and large pipe cut in half the length-ways: it was supported by iron-feet over a fire of coals, and on end of it was a little sloping towards the water; an officer of the second order held the end of a rope of about the thickness of a little finger; which crossing the breadth of the canal, was wound round the concave circumference of a very large wheel on the other side; through the center of this wheel went an axle, to which were fastened two strong handles to turn it by, and several men stood ready by them to that end. Several priests, and some initiates, together with Sethos and Orpheus, were seated, on the right and on the left, by the sides of the wheel. As intrepid as Saphon was, he could not forbear asking the chief priest of the expiation, the only priest that was with him, what was to be the nature of his punishment, that he might prepare for it? The priest answered him, that he had some reason to call the purifications he was going thro', a punishment; but however, that if he could bear the simple

¹⁶⁸ Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, 225.

agitations of his body, and above all, would not suffer himself to be overcome by a fear (which they ought not to suspect in him) he would come out of them as sound as he went in. They made him swallow some drops of a strengthening liquor; after which, they tucked up his hair under a cap of incombustible linen: they next striped him stark-naked, and laid him upon a sheet on the ground, stretched out at length. There, he who held the cord tied his two wrists cross one another, and stretching out his arms to their full length, he bound his feet together with the same cord, leaving as much rope as was necessary to go from the wrists to the feet, without hurting the natural situation of his body. All this was done with a wonderful quickness and sleight of hand, and without giving him the least reason of complaint. In this condition six men lifted him up, and desiring him to close his mouth and eyes, plunged him over head and ears into the brass vessel, which was filled with a dissolution of garlic, saffron, oil of worms, and other ingredients; which, when mixed, had the infallible virtue of resisting the force of fire. These officers took care, during the short time they held the patient plunged in the vessel, to shift their hands continually, that every part of his body might be tinged with the liquor. Immediately afterwards, they laid him on the bed of red-hot iron; and the property of the ointment was such, that it made the body slide rapidly from it and fall in an instant into the water; where were officers naked, ready to receive him, that he might not strike against the banks which were shelving; and other plunged in and followed him, that he might not touch the bottom. In the meantime, the wheel, to which the rope was fastened, turned round with a regular motion, to draw the patient over in such a space of time that he might not be suffocated by the water. He came out feet foremost; and being drawn to the wheel, with his head hanging downwards, he was fastened to it by leather straps under his armpits; and in this condition the wheel was turned three times quite round with him upon it. From this, Orpheus took his idea of the fable of Ixion. He was then loosened from the wheel; and being laid on a bed, was carried into an upper chamber, where the priests, who were physicians, gave him all sorts of restoratives that might be necessary for the relief of his body or mind. However, he was afterwards carried back again into his prison, where he was to lie the following night. By this description we see that the three parts of corporal atonement for criminals, answered exactly to the three trials of the purification of the body preparative to the initiation; but there was this difference, that these trials of candidates for the initiation were voluntary; whereas criminals, being always bound, were forced by the hands of others to undergo their punishments. There were, indeed, atonements of a more moderate nature for crimes less atrocious than murder.¹⁶⁹

This description of purification (which the priests said could also be called a punishment) shows how the initiate would pass through first a trial of fire, and second, of water. He must have come out of this ordeal in an unconscious state, for it was necessary for the physician priests to give him “all sorts of restoratives that might be necessary for the relief of his body or mind.”

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 226-227.

Something Monostatos discloses in a dialogue with Pamina indicates that under the temples were caverns outfitted just so, so that such rituals could occur. The scene takes place right after the Queen asks Pamina to murder Osiris. Monostatos overhears their conversation and learns about the Circle of the Sun. After Tamino passes the trial of silence, and before he undergoes the trials of fire and water, Sarastro says to him: “Prince, so far you have borne yourself with manly composure, but you still have two more dangerous paths to follow. If your heart still beats warmly for Pamina, and you wish to rule as a wise sovereign, may the gods continue to accompany you. Your hand! Bring in Pamina!” As already discussed, women were not allowed in the Mysteries in ancient Egypt, so here *Die Zauberflöte* sharply deviates from the rule. Pamina undergoes the trials of fire and water together with Tamino. They march through their ordeal, lead by the flute:

MARSCH
362 Adagio

Fl. solo
Cl.
Cor.
Trbn.
Timp.

365

368

Tamino and Pamina sing to the flute: “We walked through burning fires, bravely tamed the danger. May your sound be protection in the water-torrents just as it was in the fire:”

511

PAMINA

TAMINO Wir wan - del - ten durch Feuers - glu - ten, be -

Wir wan - del - ten durch Feuers - glu - ten, be -

Ob. I

Archi

Fag. I

373

- kämpf - ten mu - tig die Ge - fahr, dein Ton sei Schutz in Was - ser - flu - ten, so

- kämpf - ten mu - tig die Ge - fahr, dein Ton sei Schutz in Was - ser - flu - ten, so

Ob. I

Viol.

Fag. I con Tenore (Tamino)

Val.

Not all initiates were strong enough to survive such a horrific ordeal, and there was a real possibility of death involved in initiation. This is the reason for Sarastro’s prayer to Isis and Osiris, just before Tamino and Pamina undergo the purification trials of fire and water. The Priests join him:

SARASTRO
 O Isis und Osiris schenket
 Der Weisheit Geist dem neuen Paar!
 Die ihr der Wandrer Schritte lenket,
 Stärkt mit Geduld sie in Gefahr.

CHOR DER PRIESTER
 Stärkt mit Geduld sie in Gefahr.

SARASTRO
 Lasst sie der Prüfung Früchte sehen,
 Doch sollten sie zu Grabe gehen,
 So lohnt der Tugend kühnen Lauf;
 Nehmt sie in euren Wohnsitz auf.

CHOR DER PRIESTER
 Nehmt sie in euren Wohnsitz auf.

SARASTRO

Oh Isis and Osiris grant
The spirit of wisdom to the new pair!
You who direct the wanderers' steps,
Strengthen them with patience at times of danger.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS

Strengthen them with patience at times of danger.

SARASTRO

Let them see the fruits of their trial,
Should they however go to the grave,
Then reward the bold course of virtue;
Take them up to your abode.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS

Take them up to your abode.

After the last trial they are purified, and the choir welcomes them into the temple for the marriage:

CHOR

Triumph! Triumph! du edles Paar!
Besieget hast du die Gefahr!

Geläutert bist du licht und rein!

Komm, tritt nun in den Tempel ein.

Der Isis Weihe ist nun
dein!

Kommt, tretet in den
Tempel ein.

CHORUS

Triumph! Triumph! You noble pair!
You have conquered the danger!
You are purified, bright and clear!

Come, step now into the temple.

The initiation of Isis
is now yours!

Come, step into the
temple.

The triumphal music after they pass through the tests is built upon the ascending triadic chords, the same ones that opened the Overture and Act 2:

390

Soprano
Alto
Tenore
Basso

Tri-umph, Tri-umph, Tri-umph, du ed - les Paar, be-sie-get
Tri-umph, Tri-umph, Tri-umph, du ed - les Paar, be-sie-get
Tri-umph, Tri-umph, Tri-umph, du ed - les Paar, be-sie-get
Tri-umph, Tri-umph, Tri-umph, du ed - les Paar, be-sie-get

+Ob.
+Cor.
+Archi

Papageno, who failed the initial trial of silence, is not allowed to take the other two, as the Speaker informs him: “Papageno, you deserve to go wandering in the bowels of the earth forever; but the gracious gods release you from punishment. Yet now you will never know the heavenly pleasure of the Initiates.” Papageno deserves to die the second death, wandering in the bowels of the earth (Hades) forever, according to the speaker. But the good gods spare him from this punishment and provide a feast for him, which he hungrily devours.

Tamino’s subterranean trials are not only a symbol of the “cleansing” indoctrination process required by the order, but are also a symbol of his near-death experience, and possibly even death. This is depicted in the frontispiece of the opera by the figure emerging from the earth at bottom center.

The scene that introduces Sarastro’s above speech takes place in the vault of a pyramid, signifying the underworld through which they will have to go. Additionally, the stage directions call for two priests carrying “an illuminated pyramid on their shoulders; the other priests hold transparent pyramids of the size of a lantern in their hands. Eighteen priests stand in a triangle, six to each side.”¹⁷⁰ The significance of the triangle is linked to fire and water, which are linked to the dual principle of contrary forces. This is made clear by von Born who states in *Über die*

¹⁷⁰ James Steakley, *German Opera Libretti* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1995), 49.

Mysterien der Egypters that the “good principle” was thought to be life-giving water, which “kept everything damp and was necessary for things to grow and came from the benevolent Osiris.” The good principle was symbolized by an upward pointing triangle. The “evil principle” was symbolized by a downward pointing triangle, “fire, which destroyed everything” and which “was the property and characteristic of Typho:”

The Egyptians compared the universe with a perfect triangle. The ibis was venerated by the Egyptians because his beak is turned towards the earth and his two feet form a perfect triangle. One shouldn't be surprised,' Plutarch continues, 'that the Egyptians were occupying themselves with what seemed to be insignificant imaginings. Doesn't the triangular symbol, the fork of Neptune, point to the third empire which came to Neptune as his domain when heaven and earth were parted and the water was separated? There was air, earth, and then water, the third empire. Doesn't the name of Venus Amphitrite and the Triton have a reference and a connection with the number three? And with the Pythagoreans, don't they call a three-sided triangle with equal sides Minerva? They refer to themselves as Tritogenia.' Under the signs or the symbols of hieroglyphic cursive writing you will see or encounter a triangle quite frequently, and I have more than one proof that triangles signified that which it does in today's chemistry. For us it is fire. If the point is up then it is fire, if the point is down it is water. According to the comprehension which the Egyptians had as to the origin of our world out of chaos which I talked about in the second section, the Egyptians believed it was water and fire that were the means by which the earth originated out of chaos. Plutarch, who wrote down the accounts of Osiris, Isis, and Horus as allegorical writings which talk about nature's effects, confirms this with more than one assuring statement. He says that the dampness of nature and the presence of water is the principle in all material things and it makes up a good portion of the earth and the air. Fire on the other hand, is a dry element that is opposite of water, or opposed to water; it is related to the sun but it is not the same as the sun. Egyptians believed in a good and a bad principle, they had a good versus an evil principle, which governed the world; they assumed that it existed, that these two were the main players that ruled or governed the earth and they assumed that it was water that kept everything damp and was necessary for things to grow and it was coming from the benevolent Osiris and fire that destroyed everything was the property and characteristic of Typhon.¹⁷¹

Thus, by undergoing trials of water and fire the initiates were in effect undergoing trials that symbolized an immersion in the principle of the contrary forces of good and evil. This is confirmed by Terrasson's statement that the high priest would “invoke the gods, that they will eternally imprint in the mind of this young prince [*Sethos*], those maxims which they [the gods]

¹⁷¹ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 116.

themselves have inspired in him.”¹⁷² As he came face to face with his god, the initiate entered a supposed soteriological initiation, after which his consciousness in this life was transformed in such a way that he would from henceforth operate by the good and evil paradigm. In the process of meeting the gods face to face, the initiate also experienced, through enactment, the murder and resurrection of Osiris, thus becoming the Lord of the Dead. This was termed the process of Osirification, the process of becoming a god, and which also meant ‘offering’ *Maat*.

The process of offering *Maat* was a profession of faith in the dual principle; in it the initiate, like the gods, sets “the world aright, a role repeatedly portrayed in temple scenes and ritual literature.”¹⁷³ Setting the world aright involved the murder of Typho (divine retribution), and the Sacred Marriage of the Prince. It was through the offspring of this marriage, Horus, that the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice would be perpetuated.

The concept of purification by water and fire is also found in the Christian texts, which state that the earth was once purified by water, the flood, and will be purified again by fire: “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire.”¹⁷⁴ In this passage, both water and fire are seen to cause destruction, a phenomenon which falls in line with the destructive element of the principle they represent. This same concept was voiced by von Born:

Freemasons who are searching for similarities may look at their jewelry and see on the dipper a lowered pointed triangle and on the handle of the key they will see an upward pointing triangle. They are looking at what Egyptians took to be the essence of cosmogonies, the fire and the water, the most effected solvents or agents of dissolution in nature. And it will remind you of Hermes Trismegistus who put things back together after things had been destroyed by them.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Terrasson, *The Life of Sethos*, 225.

¹⁷³ Byron Esely Shafer, et al., *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 70.

¹⁷⁴ 2Peter 3:7, KJV.

¹⁷⁵ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 118.

THE SACRED MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE

The Sacred Marriage in *Die Zauberflöte* takes place in the final scene, inside the Temple of the Sun, after Tamino and Pamina have been purified. When Tamino comes out of the earth he is symbolically vivified, (Osirified, become like an Osiris), and his marriage with Pamina takes place. The principles of The Mysteries are perpetuated through this marriage, ensuring that the law of order, the balance of good and evil, are maintained in the universe. The musical language of this celebration conveys an explosion of light, E flat Major, on the words “Schönheit und Weisheit” (beauty and wisdom), highlighting the opera’s main purpose:

857

krö - net zum Lohn die Schön - heit und Weis - heit mit e - wi - ger

krö - net zum Lohn die Schön - heit und Weis - heit mit e - wi - ger

krö - net zum Lohn die Schön - heit und Weis - heit mit e - wi - ger

krö - net zum Lohn die Schön - heit und Weis - heit mit e - wi - ger

+Fl. II

+Trbni.

Tutti

The marriage of the Prince was a ritual component of the Isis Mysteries called the Sacred Marriage and its meaning, its symbolism, reaches cosmic proportions in Egyptian mystical thought. There are two major implications to the sacred marriage. The first involved the temporary resurrection of Osiris, and the second his once a year act of fecundating Isis. The second ensures the perpetuation of the throne through the offspring of this yearly act, in the birth of Horus.

A revisiting of the story of Isis and Osiris shall clarify its meaning. David Silverman provides the following insights:

As members of the “Ennead,” or first nine gods, Isis and Osiris were two of the five siblings (along with Seth, Nephthys and Horus the Elder) born on successive days to Nut, the goddess of the sky, and Geb, the god of the earth. As Geb’s eldest son, Osiris attained kingship of the earth, and married his sister Isis, whom he had loved even in the womb. His brother Seth, in a loveless marriage to Nephthys, coveted the throne and schemed to obtain it by stealth. In the classical rendition, the unsuspecting Osiris was betrayed at a grand feast for the gods, where Seth offered a novel object – a coffin – as a “party favour” to whomever it should fit. Although various gods sought to claim the prize, the coffin had been carefully made to fit Osiris alone. Once the god was securely inside, Seth and his confederates promptly sealed the coffin and cast it into the Nile. Osiris drowned, and death was introduced in the world. With much labour, Isis then sought and retrieved the body of her slain husband, but Seth again seized the corpse and cut it into many pieces. These he scattered across Egypt, so that each province could later claim a relic and shrine of the deceased god. In company with her sister Nephthys, Isis sailed through the marshes or flew as a kite in search of the scattered parts, and at length they reunited the dismembered body of Osiris with the aid of Anubis, the god of mummification. While still a corpse, Osiris was reinvigorated through the magical abilities of Isis, so that she conceived a son and heir to the throne, Horus the Child. The orphan Horus is assaulted repeatedly by Seth and his emissaries, but through the protection of Isis he is cured of all injury. The image of the wounded Horus became a standard feature of healing spells, which typically invoke powers of the milk of Isis.¹⁷⁶

It is through magic that Isis reinvigorates Osiris, that is, brings him back to life. This is a central concept in the Mysteries. The black art of alchemy originated in the Isis Mysteries and had the main purpose of overcoming decay and putrefaction typified by Osiris’ death.

Isis, Osiris and Horus, form a mythological trinity representing life-death-rebirth. Their worship was connected with the yearly crop harvesting (rebirth) along with the quest for the after-life (rebirth). The cult of Osiris is based on necromancy, and Horus is the offspring of the union between a dead father and a living mother. Alan Gardner explains that “it is always as a dead king that Osiris appears, the role of the living king being invariably played by Horus, his son and heir. This dual relationship of Horus and Osiris as living and dead king respectively has

¹⁷⁶ David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134-135.

been far too much neglected hitherto, although it underlies not only the whole of the funerary cult of the Pharaohs but also the whole of the daily ritual in the temple.”¹⁷⁷

Gardner states that the yearly Osirian festival took place on the latter half of the fourth month of the Egyptian calendar year and continued to the last, the thirtieth, day of the month:

From the eighteenth day of this month to the twenty-fifth were made and watered those remarkable Osiris-beds of barley on which our author rightly lays much stress. On the twenty-second day of the month occurred the time-honoured ceremony of the “hacking up of the earth,” which also hints at an agricultural aspect of these festivals. The twenty-sixth day was the Memphite festival of Sokaris, which has been shown by Sethe to be as much connected with the kingship as it was with the resuscitation of Osiris. The culmination of the Osirian feast days took place on the thirtieth and last day of the month, the day of the “raising of the Dad-column”...Now this day was clearly and incontestably the day of the resurrection of Osiris; but-and this is the point particularly to be emphasized-the resurrection of Osiris on this day was not that of a young and vigorous god of vegetation, but that of a dead king recalled in the tomb to a semblance of his former life. The evidence for this contention is overwhelming; the Denderah inscriptions explicitly describes the thirtieth day of the fourth month as the day of “raising the Dad-column in Busiris, the day of the interment of Osiris” On the next day, the first day of the first month of Pilet or spring-tide, a great festival was celebrated throughout the land, the festival called Khoiak or Neheb-kau. This last name means “uniting the kas,” and may refer to a far distant historical occasion on which unison and concord were proclaimed throughout the whole of Egypt on the accession of a new King, a new Horus.¹⁷⁸

Another Egyptologist, G.D. Hornblower, explains that the cult’s climactic rituals were fertility rites carried out in secret, referred to as The Mysteries: “The sacred rites recorded in the temple at Denderah were of a very solemn character; they were inaugurated by a great procession of priests from the different parts of the country, headed by the king, all in full panoply, as shown in the low-reliefs sculptured in one of the chambers; they were carried out in great secrecy, the 7th chapter (Loret's classification) being headed: ‘To know a mystery that is not seen or heard, but is handed down from father to son.’”¹⁷⁹ The central component of the ritual in the Isis Mysteries was the sacred marriage portrayed in Plate K:

¹⁷⁷ Alan H. Gardiner, “Untitled review of *The Golden Bough: Adonis, Attis, Osiris; Studies in the History of Oriental Religion* by J. G. Frazer.” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 2 (1915): 122.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁷⁹ G. D. Hornblower, “Osiris and His Rites, II,” *Man* 37 (1937): 172.



Hornblower describes the scene:

Plate K depicts the culminating scene of the great rite of the latter half of the month of Hathor which, in the Egyptian calendar, is the last of the four months of the Flood. It is sculptured in an inner chamber attached to the hall of Sukkur (Sokaris) in the temple of Seti I at Abydos; the other low-reliefs in the chamber show the king adoring various deities, but this is the principal scene. It is inscribed “May Osiris Unnefer (the Good Being) give to King Menmaat-re (Seti I) life and power (?joy)” and puts the king in special relation with the god since this moment was the supreme one in the adventures in myth of Osiris. At Denderah, it is part of a series of low-reliefs illustrating the secret esoteric part of the great rite and, with the priestly instructions concerning the latter, is carved on the walls of a chapel on the roof of the temple there. Osiris is seen lying as a mummy in the ‘House of Sukkur’ -that is, the tomb, since Sukkur was the Memphian death-god. At his head is his sister-wife Isis, who is the Great Lady of Magic, and is here engaged in calling her dead husband back to life, temporarily, for the purpose revealed in the most important detail of her work. For Isis, whose name is inscribed beside her, hovers in the form of a falcon over the body of Osiris who, now resuscitated, is seen in the act of fecundating her; thus the rite reveals itself as the solemnizing of a Sacred Marriage. The culminating rite described above was performed at the end of the whole ceremony and then, as the text tells us, Osiris was once more wrapped up as a mummy and taken back, his duty done, to his dark abode, there to rest another year-hence perhaps he was usually given the epithet of “heart-weary,” not of “dead.” The return was accompanied by the chanting of secret spells, in which a point of great interest is that the spells made there previously were thought still to retain their power, and had to be made innocuous by the new ones on each recurrence of the rite, so strong was the power believed to inhere in words.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 156-157.

Hornblower also states that “the sacred marriage is not mentioned in the text but its culminating episode is portrayed in the low-reliefs accompanying it as plainly as in the temple of Seti I at Abydos, and equally so are the scenes preparatory to it. The object of the sculptures is to exhibit Osiris in the various centres of his worship at one moment or another of the act of temporary revivification.”¹⁸¹

Upon this marriage, according to Isis’ secrets, the order of the universe was dependent, as well as death and the after-life:

The Rites proclaim that the “greatest affair of the State is the marriage of the Prince;” on it depends the order of the world and “of society; the universe is at once deranged if” the union” between king and queen becomes “imperfect” -and the king was of the same divine order as the Pharaohs, being the “Son of Heaven.” The idea of man’s “completion” by marriage rests on the same basis as this exalted notion about royal marriages; it has a striking parallel in ancient Greece where telos, meaning “completion” was applied to the act of marriage while the plural tele signified “mystery rites” (Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 620 ff.). This point has been somewhat elaborated by Professor George Thomson in his book on “Aeschylus and Athens” (London, 1941, p. 127); he gives the name “te’leios-” the completed “-not only to the initiated in the Mysteries but also to the newly wedded youth.”¹⁸²

NATURE/MAGIC

The significance of magic in *Die Zauberflöte* is self-evident. The words “Zauber” (magic), and flöte (flute), envelop the entire work in magical meaning. In handing the flute to Tamino the Queen embodies Isis as the goddess and yielder of magic. The flute’s function in the opera will be treated in the next sub-section. This one will give a historical synopsis of magic in ancient Egypt.

Von Born states that hermetic philosophy was the “intellectual property of the Egyptian priest alone, which they never shared with anyone unless they had been initiated into the deepest secrets which they had buried deep into hieroglyphs, the code of which thousands have tried to break are rarely succeed. It is hermetic philosophy which comprises both magic and

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 172.

¹⁸² Hornblower, “Fertility-Rite,” 30.

alchemy, two bodies of knowledge that have been lost, or seem to have been, among mankind to the point that even the largest number of the most brilliant enlightened spirits of our century proudly believe it has never existed before.”¹⁸³ Von Born states that it was the priests who possessed that knowledge, a fact that is corroborated and recorded by ancient historians.

Ancient Egyptians believed that magic was the inner most knowledge of nature, and they acquired this knowledge through Theurgie. As already discussed Theurgie puts one in direct communication with the spirits in order to utilize their magical powers. Thus, by definition, they acquired their knowledge directly from the gods, i.e., from supernatural spirits. Von Born states that it was because of this direct connection that the priests had an obsession with cleanliness, as they were always purifying themselves and going through sacrificial rituals in order to get closer to the supernatural spirits, which they believed were roaming above the earth.

There were many manifestations of magic in ancient Egypt, Isis being the primary goddess involved with it. Isis was the goddess of Nature, which was a euphemism for the supernatural spirits. She had power to produce medicine from plants and herbs, the power to transform matter and to bring Osiris back to life.

The art of black magic was born out of fear of the second death. Mpay Kemboly states that Egyptians feared most was the second death, the state of eternal annihilation:

Egyptians, who were utterly terrified by the idea of dying for the second time, which meant being thrown into the realm of total annihilation and absolute nonexistence, thought that they could escape that ominous fate by various means of magic.¹⁸⁴

This fear explains why Egyptians had so many texts inscribed on their coffins, temples and pyramids. These were magical spells meant to ward off the second death, that state of nothingness. The magical art of transmutation is said to have originated in Egypt. This occult art

¹⁸³ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 72.

¹⁸⁴ Kemboly, *The Question of Evil*, 198.

was also known as alchemy. One form of alchemy was the turning of stones into gold, as explained by Matheus Berk:

Alchemy had to do with transformation, in particular of base metals into precious ones. 'And all things are woven together, and all things are dissolved, and all things are mixed with one another, and all things are combined, and things are again unmixed,' as Zosimus formulates it.¹⁸⁵

Von Born claims that "the priests were somehow involved with the production of noble metals; they had it in their power to do that."¹⁸⁶ The evidence he offers that Egyptians had the power to make noble metals like gold is that Egypt possessed no reservoirs of gold; additionally, Egypt had no foreign trade, and no way of obtaining noble metals, and yet they made two chapels of pure gold for Osiris, and a large gold ring above the magnificent and sumptuous grave of Osimanduas. Below is von Born's description:

The burial site which Osimanduas had built was ten stadia in size. The ante court which directed you into the temple was pieced out of small pieces, was two hundred shoes long and 45 shoes high. It had square columns that were 16 forearms high, and was made from stones resembling animals that supported the roof instead of columns. The roof was made of stones that were 8 shoes long, and the ceiling was blue with golden stars painted on it. And from there, from that ante court, you got into the hall, whose walls were totally covered with hieroglyphics, and from there were covered arched areas, again very ornamented, and then you got into the library. The library had a sign over the entrance that said 'nourishment and medicament for the soul.' From the library you entered into the house in which the king's dead body was to be laid, surrounded by a number of small buildings which were designated to the keeping of holy animals. You had to go up some stairs to arrive at the sarcophagus where the dead body was to be in, above which there was one forearm thick golden circle that is 365 forearms in circumference on which they had the 365 subdivisions for each day of the year and the different astronomical notations on it ... The splendid two hundred feet long floor of mosaic works in the ante court of the graveside of Osimanduas may have contributed to the mosaics in the floor of Solomon's temple ... The golden circle which is above the sarcophagus of Osimanduas, which has the constellations, was mentioned in the yearbooks prior to Alexander's arrival. It talks about 373 suns, and 382 times that the moon is dark, and there is a teaching which Thales obtained from Egypt in order to calculate that the times of an eclipse of the sun. They had this known Egyptian system which observed the movement of Venus and Mercury around the sun with tremendous and admired precision, and it was all these calculations that helped them designate

¹⁸⁵ Matheus Franciscus Maria Berk, *The Magic Flute: An Alchemical Allegory* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2004),

40.

¹⁸⁶ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 74.

the four directions on earth with such precision as to be able to place the Egyptian pyramids.¹⁸⁷

Alchemy's reach is wider than the confined definition of turning stones into gold, however. By definition, alchemy is the manipulation of the chemistry that is naturally found in nature, and in a mystical sense it has as its main goal the "salvation of humankind," as indicated by Carrie Lee Rothgeb:

All chemistry is in fact transformation, as is the splitting of the atom in modern times, from which entirely new elements can arise, though special energies are needed...But alchemy also had an inner side, translating mystical experiences into chemical language and using this language to cover over a Gnostic redemptive path to the salvation of humankind, as in the ascent of Theosebeia through the seven heavens to the divine realm of light. What links alchemy to modern natural science, though, in its effort to gain mastery over nature, is its sense of being capable of transforming everything.¹⁸⁸

Alchemy was referred to as the "divine" or "sacred art." As such, it was practiced only in the temples. Thus, its origins are found in a religious context, and it was practiced for the specific purpose of perpetuating life or, in other words, of stopping the death process. According to Erik Hornung, alchemy's Egyptian origins are clear:

The standard alchemic work, the *Physika kai Mystika* of Pseudo-Democritus, which probably goes back to Bolus of Mendes, speaks of instruction in an Egyptian temple (presumably that of Ptah at Memphis), and the most recent authority cited is "the great Ostanos," who initiated Democritus and "the Egyptian priests" into alchemy.¹⁸⁹

Carrie Lee Rothgeb traces the western branches of alchemy back to the ninth century. She also indicates that the Rosicrucians and Freemasons found these beliefs and practiced them:

Arabic writers began to translate alchemic texts in the ninth century, but relevant tractates in the Arabic language already appeared a century earlier; some of them were ascribed to the Ommaya prince Khalid. In 1144, Robert of Chester made the first translation of an Arabic work on alchemy into Latin (he is also the first known translator of the Quran), thereby introducing this *ars nova* into Europe. Subsequently, alchemy would remain a part of western tradition, and it spread like wildfire in the thirteenth century. From the Renaissance on, we see it closely connected with the Hermetic tradition; characteristic is the Musaeum

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹⁸⁸ Carrie Lee Rothgeb, *Abstracts of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (London: H Karnac (Books) Ltd, 1992), 40-41.

¹⁸⁹ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 34, 35.

Hermeticum, the title of a collection of alchemic treatises published in 1625. Rosicrucians and Freemasons adopted its vivid language, and alchemy was still in full bloom in the last decades of the eighteenth century – so much so that in 1785, Kaiser Joseph II saw fit to forbid it in his Austro-Hungarian realm.¹⁹⁰

In the symbolism surrounding alchemy there is a suggestion of the serpent's involvement. The symbolic figure used in connection with alchemy is the dragon/serpent. The symbol of chemical change from the earliest days of alchemy has been the fiery dragon, or salamander. Artistic renderings of the symbol portray the messenger of the gods holding a two-headed-serpent staff, denoting its rule of Dyadic quality. The symbol also depicts the wings of the messenger of the gods which Hermes, Thoth, Mercury and various other gods were linked with:



Rothgeb claims that Carl Jung, the psychologist and alchemist, saw the focus of alchemy as a quest for immortality. Rothgeb states that for him, “the real aim of alchemy was to produce a *corpus subtile*, a transfigured and resurrected body; a body that was at the same time spirit. This is compared with Chinese alchemy with its main concern for the ‘diamond body;’ that is, the attainment of immortality through the transformation of the body.”¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Rothgeb, *Abstracts*, 40-41.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

THE FLUTE/MUSIC

Marianne Tettlebaum asks the question as to whose world view is represented on the stage of *Die Zauberflöte*:

Because it is unclear who has the flute, it is also unclear to whom or to what we as interpreters should turn in determining whose worldview is represented on the stage. There has been, therefore, no scholarly consensus on the issue. Does the opera belong to the Enlightenment and its promise of wisdom, equality, and truth? Or does it belong to a counter-Enlightenment in which these promises go unfulfilled and are even contradicted? Is it, with its fairy-tale quality and fascination with mystery and magic, a product of German Romanticism rather than the Enlightenment? Is it a Masonic allegory? Or is it a political drama of the Habsburgs? ¹⁹²

The flute's power is magic, and whoever plays it exerts control over those who listen. The music of the flute is symbolic of wisdom and knowledge in the context of the Dyad. The flute is a symbol of something bigger than just musical tones or sound frequencies. It is a symbol of the "music," or the "message," of the flute player. The message is Dyadic wisdom, the knowledge is that of good and evil.

Rose Rosengard Subotnik's article "Whose *Magic Flute*?" states that *Die Zauberflöte* has become such a beloved work, that it has in fact become "ours." If asked what the opera is about, most would likely say that its main theme is about love, truth, and the victory of good versus evil. Oddly, however, very few would say that this opera is about a flute with magical powers. It behooves us to ask the question, Why did Mozart and the co-creators of the opera choose the title *The Magic Flute*? What is the meaning of the flute? What is the magic it possesses?

Tettlebaum focuses on the flute itself, as her title indicates. Her opening paragraph invites further examination of the meaning of the flute of magical powers prominently mentioned in the title of Mozart's opera:

According to the chorus at the conclusion of act 1, scene 8 of Mozart's opera, a magic flute is a powerful instrument. Whoever possesses it is endowed, as the chorus sings, with an "allmächtig" (all-powerful) capacity to take action, increase

¹⁹² Marianne Tettlebaum, "Whose Magic Flute?" *Representations*, 102 (2008): 77.

human happiness, and transform the passions of the human soul. A magic flute, therefore, is not only a powerful instrument but also an instrument of power. Whoever plays—or wields—it can determine the course of events in the opera and the destiny of its characters. Whoever has the flute, in other words, is the source of the power that governs the opera. How we interpret that power, then, depends on whom we identify as the flute-player. The question, whose magic flute? is thus synonymous with the question of whose power is represented on the stage, whose worldview ultimately prevails. For whoever has the flute determines our understanding of what the opera stands for, what it means. The magical power the flute-player wields within the opera is also an interpretive power over the opera; as interpreters, we inevitably take our cue from the flute-player. If *The Magic Flute* hinges on the power of a magic flute then we ought to know whose power, whose flute, we are talking about.¹⁹³

Tettlebaum's thesis proposes that the flute and its player hold preeminent power over both events and characters in the opera, for they possess the ultimate tool of control: magic. Two key questions arising from her observations are 1) What is the power of the flute, and 2) Who is the flute player? These questions lead to others: Why does the flute player use magical powers at all? Who does he/she want to control with his/her magic? What is the nature of this magic? As she points out, "the flute is not only a powerful instrument, but also an instrument of power."

Clues as to who the flute player is are found in the opera. Pamina discloses the origins of the flute to Tamino just before they enter the gates of terror:

PAMINA

Ich werd' an allen Orten an deiner Seite seyn.

Ich selber führe dich,

Die Liebe leite mich;
Sie streu' uns Rosen auf den Pfad,

Den dornicht unser Fuss betrat;

Der Zauberflöte Himmelsklang

Erleichtre unsern Heldengang:

In seiner Zauberhöhle Schlunde

Schnitt einst mein Vater sie tief in der Geisterstunde,

Ich werde aller Orten
an deiner Seit seyn.
Ich selbst führe
dich -

Sie mag den Weg mit
Rosen streun,
Weil Rosen stets bei
Dornen seyn.
Spiel du die
Zauberflöte an
Sie schütze uns auf
unsrer Bahn.
Es schnitt in einer
Zauberstunde
Mein Vater sie aus
tiefstem Grunde

¹⁹³ Ibid., 76.

Aus einer ew'gen Zeder aus,

Bei Blitz und Donner, Sturm und Braus.
Lass tönen nun den Himmelsklang,

Erleichtr'uns unsern Heldengang;

PAMINA, TAMINO, 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
Ihr wandeltWir wandeln) durch des Tones Macht,
Froh durch des Todes düstre Nacht.

TAMINO

Here are the gates of terror,
Which threaten danger and death.

PAMINA

I will be at your side in all places.

I myself will lead you,
May love guide me!
May she strew roses on the path

Which our foot trod beset with thorns.

May the heavenly sound of the magic flute
Ease our heroic path:

In the abyss of his magic cave

My father once cut it, deep in the hour of the spirits,

From an eternal oak,

In lightning and thunder, storm and turbulence.
Let it now play its heavenly sound,

Ease for us our heroic path;

PAMINA, TAMINO, 2 ARMED MEN

Through the power of the sound you/we) walk
Joyfully through the gloomy night of death

Der tausendjäh'gen
Eiche aus

Nun komm und spiel
die Flöte an!
Sie leite uns auf
grauser Bahn.

I will be at your side
in all places.
I myself will lead you,

She may strew the
path with roses,
Since roses are always
accompanied by
thorns.

Play the magic flute
It should protect us
on our journey.
My father cut it in a
magic hour
From the profoundest
depths
Of the thousand-year-
old oak

Now come and play
on the flute!
May it guide us on
our grim pathway.

Pamina reveals that it was her father who fashioned the flute “out of the thousand year-old oak,” “...in a magical hour for the most important reasons.”

Tettlebaum suggests that the agency behind the flute is divine, or at least supernatural:

At the end of the opera...we learn from Pamina that the flute belonged originally neither to the Queen nor to Sarastro but, in fact, to Pamina's father, who carved it

from the heart of an ancient oak during a “magical hour” amidst a thunderstorm. Here the flute’s power seems to be one with the power of nature, materialized in the ancient oak, symbolized by the storm, and formed through the agency of Pamina’s father. But even this explanation is superseded at the end of the opera by the possibility that the flute’s origin is divine rather than natural. When the final chorus sings praises to the gods Isis and Osiris, we might suspect that they have been responsible all along for the events of the opera, which would suggest that the agency behind the flute is divine.¹⁹⁴

A possible connection is made here with the god Osiris. Born’s essay describes Osiris as a travelling musician who taught the people how to make music and how to dance, and how he so charmed the people with his music that they became followers of his wisdom. Terrason states that it was Osiris who created the single flute: “the musick-gallery, where, on certain days, were held concerts of voices and instruments, was likewise a treasure of the antiquities of this art. Here ‘twas found that the shalm, the shepherd’s flute, and other wind instruments, were the first invented; and here was even shewn the flute of several pipes of unequal lengths, that was in use before Osiris invented the single flute, which expressed all the tones of the former.”¹⁹⁵

Apuleius affirms that the flute was used in the Mysteries of Isis, and the flute players were consecrated to the god Serapis. Serapis was “the Ptolemaic form of Apis, an Egyptian deity who, when dead, was honored under the attributes of Osiris and thus became ‘osirified Apis’ or [O] Sorapis. He was lord of the underworld.”¹⁹⁶ Coleridge confirms Apuleius’ account of the usage of the flute in the Isis Mysteries: “Apuleius, in speaking of the Mysteries of Isis, describes the crooked flute as held by the performer with the crook turned towards his right ear.”¹⁹⁷ Thus the conclusion can be reached that as the mythological inventor of the flute, it is Osiris that the flute symbolizes, and Osiris is the flute player of the opera. Matheus Franciscus Maria Berk confirms Osiris’ connection to the flute when he says that “the flute, by virtue of its shape alone, is regarded as a typical masculine instrument. In Hermetic circles, Osiris was seen as its creator.

¹⁹⁴ Tettlebaum, “Whose Magic Flute?,” 77.

¹⁹⁵ Terrason, *The Life of Sethos*, 97-98.

¹⁹⁶ “Serapis.” *Encyclopedia Mythica* from Encyclopedia Mythica Online.

<http://www.pantheon.org/offcampus.lib.washington.edu/articles/s/serapis.html> > [Accessed June 29, 2011].

¹⁹⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana: Difform-Falter* (London: B. Fellowes, 1845), 686.

Plutarch for instance mentions that Osiris is the original maker of both the transverse flute and the straight flute.”¹⁹⁸

According to the legend discussed thus far, after Typho killed Osiris by asphyxiation inside a coffin, he threw the coffin into the Nile. The coffin came to rest under a tree, which grew around it. This is likely the tree, the “ancient oak” from which the flute was fashioned during “a magical hour amidst a thunderstorm.” Von Born mentions this tree when describing a funereal yearly festival explained by Plutarch:

On a couple of days of the year the temple was covered in black, announcing that there would be pain and sorrow. It was a commemoration of the death of Osiris and his burial. On this festival, priests clad in black, the Melanophores, who belonged to the class of the Pastophores among the priests, appeared on the scene. In the first section I talked about the circumstances of how Osiris was murdered by his brother and his dead body was then cut in to pieces. Isis pursued Typho and was able to reassemble Osiris, putting together the parts of his body that could be recovered in a hurry. She put him on the banks of the Nile and, with her companions, looked anxiously at her husband’s body. She heard that the coffin had been hung up on a bush and that the bush grew high, surrounding the coffin and hiding it. The dogs of Isis found it in the moonshine and they recovered the precious coffin. This day of remembrance was observed on the 17th day of the month called Athyr.¹⁹⁹

In Egyptian mythology, the bush or tree where Osiris’ coffin rested came to symbolize the Tree of Life. This is explained by Edwin Oliver James in “The Tree of Life: An Archaeological Study:”

The Djed-column as the personification of Osiris and its cultic setting was comparable to the Tree of Life and its symbolism interpreted in terms of the rise and fall of the Nile and the annual renewal of nature... represented as the bare trunk of a tree stripped of its leaves the pillar might well be interpreted as the backbone of Osiris and its raising of the New Year’s eve the enactment of his resurrection. So closely was it associated with him, in fact, that it became the hieroglyphic symbol for his name.²⁰⁰

Since the flute has magical powers, it pertains to Isis’ realm, for to Isis belongs the domain of magic. Thus, when the Queen gives Tamino the flute, that action reveals and confirms her role in the allegory. The flute’s power is explained by the Queen’s servants, the Three Ladies:

¹⁹⁸ Berk, *Alchemical Allegory*, 317.

¹⁹⁹ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 122.

²⁰⁰ Edwin Oliver James, *The Tree of Life: An Archeological Study* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 39-40.

1^{TE} DAME

Hier Prinz, nimm dies Geschenk von mir;

Von unsrer Fürstin bring ichs dir.

Die Zauberflöte wird dich schützen,
Und tobt um dich ein Heer von Blitzen.

O Prinz! nimm dies
Geschenk von mir
Dies sendet unsre Fürstin
dir.

Im grössten Unglück
unterstützen

3 DAMEN

Durch sie kannst du allmächtig handeln,

Nach Willkühr Leidenschaft verwandeln,

Sie schmilzt zur Freude jedes Leid,

Lehrt Hagestolze Zärtlichkeit.

Hiemit kannst du allmächtig
handeln
Der Menschen Leidenschaft
verwandeln
Der Traurige wird freudig
seyn

1ST LADY

Here prince, take this present from me;

I bring it to you from our princess.
The magic flute will protect you,
Even though a host of lightning flashes rage around

Oh prince! take this present
from me
Our princess sends it to you.

Support you in the greatest
adversity you.

3 LADIES

Through it you can deal all-powerfully,

Change passions at will,
It melts to joy every sorrow,
Teaches tenderness to the loveless.

With this you can deal all-
powerfully
Change human passions,
The sad person will be joyful
Love takes in the loveless.

PAPAGENO, TAMINO, 3 LADIES

Oh! Such a flute is worth more than gold and crowns,
For through it human happiness and contentment are
increased.

As a symbol of power, the flute is able to control those who hear it. Power demands a relationship and can only exist when there is someone to overpower; thus, power denotes domination and control. A person in power is always in a superior place to the one being overpowered, which introduces the issue of freedom. Thus, power creates division between people, placing them into two camps: the powerful and the powerless.

The three ladies outline the flute's powers: protection, support in times of the greatest misfortune, all-powerful control over human behavior, the ability to transform people's suffering turning sadness into joy, changing loneliness into love, increasing happiness and satisfaction. The Ladies promise Tamino that through the flute he will have the ability to become all-powerful. There is an inherent flaw in this promise. By controlling the lives of others, the flute removes their freedom. Since the flute's main purpose is power, it camouflages its real intent of control through seductive promises of beauty, joy, love, happiness and satisfaction. Thus, it uses something good as an enticement, and it seduces in order to deceive.

The power to control emotions and tame wild beasts through music is directly related to the Orphic myth. Orpheus, the husband/musician who goes into the underworld in order to retrieve his wife from the clutches of death is perhaps the mythological figure with the most prolific rebirth in the musical arts. Tamino's initial question to the Priests, "Does Pamina still live?" echoes Orpheus's plight.

In *Sethos*, Terrasson claims that Orpheus, a Greek, wanted to go to Egypt in search of wisdom and to be initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries. His wife Eurydice was extremely devoted to him and could not bear the long separation this would cause, and thus insisted on coming with him. No sooner did they arrive in Egypt than she was bitten by an insect, and the deadly poison took her life in the matter of an hour. Because of his beautiful music and extreme grieving, Orpheus soon becomes well-known in the area, and is led to the priests who introduce him to the underworld, where he begins to search for his deceased wife. In Terrasson's novel Orpheus joins Sethos in his adventures and is even present in the punishment/initiation previously described under the section

The common denominator here, however, is the power and the magic of music. Tettlebaum makes the case that the flute plays Tamino himself, luring, seducing, and eventually overpowering and taking over his individual voice. She examines scene 15 of Act 1, and reaches the following conclusions:

We are not listening to Tamino himself, but to an enchanted instrument standing in for what he cannot otherwise express. This is instrumental music in the most complete sense; it seems to emanate automatically from the flute itself rather than from any effort on Tamino's part to play it. The music is also "instrumental" in that it serves as a medium or tool, in this case of enchantment as well as of control. It enraptures and tames not only the wild animals that surround Tamino but also Tamino himself. As the flute plays, he becomes so enchanted by its sound that he attempts to imitate it with the sound of his voice (mm. 168 ff.) and sings praises to the flute rather than to the gods (or to Pamina).²⁰¹

78
166
TAMINO
Wie stark ist nicht dein Zau - ber - ton, weil
Archi

Tettlebaum further develops the theme of the flute taking charge over Tamino:

The music seems to be controlling him; he seems to be the instrument of the flute. As long as the flute plays, in fact, Tamino remains grateful and reassured, but when he begins to sing again, his old anxieties creep in; instead of cadencing in C major as it did in measure 175,

174
(spielt)
wil - de Tie - re Freu - de - fuh - len.
Fl. solo
Archi
+ Fag.

his vocal line turns toward c minor in measures 188–92 as he wonders where Pamina is.²⁰²

186
wil - de Tie - re Freu - de - doch nur Pa - mi - na, nur Pa - mi - na bleibt da -
cresc. mf p
190
(spielt)
von, nur Pa - mi - na bleibt da - von.
Ob. Fl. solo
+ Fag. Viol. I
simile

²⁰¹ Tettlebaum, "Whose Magic Flute?," 83.

²⁰² Ibid.

When, toward the end of the piece, he calls to Pamina: “Pamina! Listen to me!” (Pamina! Höre mich!), the “me” could just as easily refer to the flute’s playing as to his singing; for, in the following measure, there is not a vocal cry, but an ascending run in the flute.²⁰³

The image shows a musical score for a scene from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features the vocal line for Tamino and Pamina, and the instrumental parts for Violin I, Oboe, Flute solo, Violin, and Arches. The lyrics are: "mi - na! Pa - mi - na! hö - re, hö - re mich! - Um-". The flute part is marked "Fl. solo" and features an ascending run in the following measure.

Tamino’s desire has become objectified through the music of the flute; the flute stands in for and expresses what he attempts to say with his own voice; when he sings “listen to me” he really means, “listen to the magic flute.” If Pamina is to hear Tamino, we are lead to believe, it must be through the sound of the magic flute. Indeed, as this section ends, instrument responds to instrument, as Papageno’s panpipes echo Tamino’s flute.²⁰⁴

Tettlebaum reasons that the flute becomes an “instrument of disappointment” and “deceit,” at least when interpreted from Pamina’s perspective. Pamina is drawn by the music of the flute, expecting to be embraced by Tamino’s love, only to suffer bitter disappointment due to his seemingly indifference imposed by his vow of silence:

Just as it [the flute] drew forth and enchanted the animals of the forest in act 1, here it draws forth Pamina, who comes searching for Tamino after hearing his flute. His refusal to engage with her prompts her heartbroken aria “Ach ich fühl’s” and eventually her suicide attempt. The flute, in other words, lures Pamina to Tamino, then deceives her, by causing her to confront Tamino’s silence and his coolness toward her entreaties. The promise of the sound of the flute is, this time, unfulfilled, if not directly contradicted. It is hard to accept that this is the instrument that, in act 1, was lauded for increasing human happiness and contentment. Here it is an instrument of disappointment, even deceit.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 84-85.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 86.

When Tamino and Pamina pass the fiery cave Tamino plays the flute. The flute's music here is pale, ethereal, disjointed. Its phrases are of unequal length, the harmonic progressions and cadences unexpected. It is as if the flute itself is hypnotized by its own beauty and power:

MARSCH
362 Adagio

Fl. solo
Clar.
Cor.
Trbni.
Timp.

365

368

Like the flute, Sarastro is a medium for power. Jean Starobinski sees his role as just such a an “interpreter” or “officiant” of the transcendent law, in *A reading of “The Magic Flute.”*

To hold sway among men, the transcendent law requires an interpreter, and only irreproachable beings can exercise this function: Sarastro is an officiant, nothing more. In vain does this theocracy (as opposed to the one that invokes “revelation”) claim to be rational, however. How can it ward off the suspicion that Enlightenment thought incessantly brings to bear upon kings and priests? And here we may introduce the second, less reassuring answer (unquestionably heretical from the viewpoint of *The Magic Flute’s* intentions): he who would pass for the interpreter of a universal power is seeking only to make respectable, and intangible, the decisions emanating from his personal will and dictated by his own interest.²⁰⁶

Starobinski further hints that power is ultimately attained by the removal of personal will and “heart.” This brings a new understanding as to why those that will not succumb to the delusions of the cold and impersonal law are treated with such contempt and must be punished or removed:

²⁰⁶ Jean Starobinski, “A Reading of “The Magic Flute,”” *The Hudson Review*, 31 (1978): 418.

Sarastro ... is not a king but a high priest. No one stands above him save the gods and their laws, of which he is the interpreter. In his famous aria, In diesen heiligen Hallen, "beneath these sacred vaults," he affirms straightaway that vengeance is unknown among initiates-kennt man die Rache nicht. Now vengeance is precisely the expression of a personal will. The initiate has abdicated this will (or passion) in order to be the servant of a humane and disinterested law (the adversaries-the Queen of the Night and Monostatos- know nothing but egoistic passion, jealousy, spite, the desire to murder, to wreak vengeance).²⁰⁷

SACRIFICE

The libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* brings the issue of sacrifice to the forefront a few times, and the question must be asked: Is there an implied human sacrifice portrayed in the opera?

The first allusion to human sacrifice in *Die Zauberflöte* is found in Tamino's opening lines: "Zu Hülfe! Zu Hülfe! Sonst bin ich verlohren! Der listigen Schlange zum Opfer erkohren" (Help! Help! Or else I am lost! Destined to be the victim of the cunning serpent). The word "Opfer" here translated as "victim" could also be rendered as sacrifice, offering, prey, casualty, oblation, or price. His statement provides the information that, to all effects, it is to the cunning serpent that Tamino is being sacrificed.

The dialogue between Tamino and the Priests again bring up the issue of sacrifice, this time in connection with Pamina. Tamino asks the Priest: "Wo ist sie, die er uns geraubt? Man opferte vielleicht sie schon?" (Where is she, whom he robbed from us? Has she perhaps already been sacrificed?) Tamino's words betray a presupposition that sacrifice was a common occurrence in the temple of Wisdom. The priests do not promptly refute Tamino's accusation. One would think that such an accusation ought to be met with a vehement denial. Instead, the priests state: "Dir dies zu sagen, theurer Sohn, Ist jetzund mir noch nicht erlaubt" (To tell you this, dear son, is not yet allowed to me now). The ensuing dialogue sheds more light:

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 419.

TAMINO
Erklär' dies Räthsel, täusch' mich nicht.

PRIESTER
Die Zunge bindet Eid und Pflicht.

TAMINO
Wann also wird die Decke schwinden?

PRIESTER
Sobald dich an der Weisheit Band
In's Heil geführt der Freundschaft Hand.

Sobald dich führt der
Freundschaft Hand
Ins Heiligthum zum ewgen
Band.

TAMINO
O dunkle Nacht! wann wirst du schwinden?

O ew'ge Nacht! wann wirst

du schwinden?
Wann wird das Licht mein Auge finden?

CHOR
Bald, Jüngling, oder nie.

TAMINO
Bald, sagt ihr, oder nie?
Ihr Unsichtbaren, saget mir,
Lebt denn Pamina noch?

CHOR
Pamina lebet noch.

TAMINO
Sie lebt? sie lebt? O tausend Dank dafür.
euch
O! dass mir doch ein Ton gelänge,
Der euch den Dank des Herzens sänge;
Der meine Adern all' durchfließt,
Dank zu schildern,
In Freudenthränen sich ergießt.
deutend) hier – entsprang.

Sie lebt, sie lebt! ich danke
dafür
O wenn ich doch im Stande
wäre,
Allmächtige, zu eurer Ehre,
Mit jedem Tone meinen

Wie er hier (*aufs Herz*

TAMINO
Explain this riddle, don't deceive me.

PRIEST
My tongue is bound by oath and duty.

TAMINO
So when will the veil be lifted?

PRIEST

As soon as the hand of friendship
Has led you on wisdom's bond to salvation.

TAMINO

Oh dark night! When will you vanish?
When will light reach my eye?

CHORUS

Soon, youth, or never.

TAMINO

Soon, you say, or never?
You invisible ones, tell me,
Does Pamina then still live?

CHORUS

Pamina still lives.

TAMINO

She lives? She lives? Oh, a thousand thanks for that.

Oh! If only I could find the sound
To sing the thanks in my heart;
Which flows through all my veins,

Pouring forth in tears of joy.

As soon as the hand of
friendship
Leads you into the sanctuary
to eternal bond.

Oh eternal night! When will
you vanish?

She lives, she lives! I thank
you for that.

If only I were truly able,
Almighty, in your honor,
To describe my thanks with
every sound that I make,
As it here, (*pointing to his
heart*) here –

The Priests reveal that Tamino would understand everything when the "veil" was lifted, and the veil would be lifted as soon as the hand of friendship led Tamino on wisdom's bond to salvation. The hand of friendship refers to the brotherhood of the Order, which leads Tamino through initiation. The bond of wisdom is the wisdom of The Mysteries, the wisdom of Isis and Osiris, the embodiment of the law of the cosmic law of Harmony. But what is the "veil?"

Sarastro gives a clue to the meaning of the "veil" in his speech at the opening of Act II. In this speech, Sarastro gives an argument in favor of accepting Tamino into the order, and in favor of allowing him to proceed with the purification trials:

SARASTRO (*nach einer Pause.*)

Ihr, in dem Weisheitstempel eingeweihten Diener der grossen Götter Osiris und Isis! – Mit reiner Seele erklar ich euch, dass unsere heutige Versammlung eine der wichtigsten unserer Zeit ist. – Tamino, ein Konigssohn, wandelt an der nordlichen Pforte unseres

Tempels und seufzt mit tugendvollen Herzen nach einem Gegenstande, den wir alle mit Muhe und Fleiss erringen müssen. Kurz, dieser Jungling will seinen nächtlichen Schleier von sich reißen und in's Heiligthum des grössten lichtetes blicken. – Diesen Tugendhaften zu bewachen, ihm freundschaftlich die Hand zu bieten, sei heute eine unserer wichtigsten Pflichten.

SARASTRO (*after a pause*)

Initates of the Temple of Wisdom in the service of the great gods Isis and Osiris! With a pure soul I declare that today's assembly is one of the most important of our time. Tamino, a king's son, twenty years of age, is waiting outside the northern gate of our temple. With a virtuous heart he longs to achieve the object which we can only reach through effort and diligence. He wishes to tear off his nocturnal veil and gaze into the sanctuary of supreme light. Today let it be one of our most pressing duties to watch over this virtuous man and to offer him the hand of friendship.

Sarastro discloses that Tamino wishes to tear off his nocturnal veil and gaze into the sanctuary of supreme light. Only the veil prevents him from gazing into the sanctuary of supreme light, the abode of the gods. The veil may represent ignorance, the darkened mind that awaits enlightenment, but it might also be a metaphor for death, for this is a nocturnal veil. This is substantiated by the fact that Osiris' cult followers believed that it was only after death that one became truly enlightened. In *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, Jan Assman confirms that the ancient Egyptians and the Freemasons believe that death is only a window through which one must pass in order to enter a higher existence:

In Egyptian mortuary belief, Osiris was the prototype of every deceased individual. Everyone would become Osiris in death and be endowed with life by Isis.²⁰⁸

The Freemasons hold the same belief:

But we learn also that, when that life is ended, it closes only to open upon a newer and higher one, where, in a second temple and purer Lodge, the Mason will find eternal truth. Death, therefore, in Masonic philosophy, is the symbol of initiation completed, perfected, and consummated.²⁰⁹

Tearing off the veil means to pass through death, so that one could gaze into the sanctuary of supreme light, the after-life. If this is so, Tamino's marriage to Pamina can only take place in

²⁰⁸ Assman, *Death and Salvation*, 35.

²⁰⁹ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences* (Philadelphia: Mclure Publishing Co, 1917), 230.

one of three ways: in this life after a symbolic ritual death; in this life after a near death experience; or in the afterlife, after a factual ritual death.

In the earlier dialogue, Tamino is not content with the Priests' answer that the veil will be lifted "as soon as the hand of friendship" leads him to eternal bond, for this has yet no meaning to him. Thus, he laments his state of ignorance as to Pamina's circumstances: "O dunkle Nacht! wann wirst du schwinden? Wann wird das Licht mein Auge finden?" (Oh dark night! When will you vanish? When will light reach my eye?) The Priests offer a glimmer of hope when they say: "Bald, Jüngling, oder nie" (soon, youth, or never). This is enough to prompt Tamino to ask the question: "Ihr Unsichtbaren, saget mir, Lebt denn Pamina noch? Pamina lebet noch?" (You invisible ones, tell me, does Pamina then still live?)

From this question it is evident that Tamino had an inkling that ritual sacrifice was practiced in the Temple of Wisdom. Tamino's greatest fear was that Pamina had already been sacrificed. He is overjoyed and relieved when the cryptic Priests finally give him something which he can hang on to: "Pamina lebet noch" (Pamina still lives). Tamino, relieved, then sings with abandoned joy: "Sie lebt? sie lebt? O tausend Dank dafür" (She lives? She lives? Oh, a thousand thanks for that).

But how is one to interpret the Priest's last enigmatic "soon, soon, young one, or never?" Soon or never—this answer implies a certain stipulation: soon, if certain conditions are met; or never, if they are not. On what, then, is Tamino's enlightenment dependent? Is it possible that the answer is connected with the purification trials? If Tamino passes the tests of silence, fire, and water, he will be enlightened in the mystical ways, if he fails, the light will never reach his eye.

The following text from Matheus Franciscus Maria Berk's book, *The Magic Flute: an Alchemical Allegory* agrees that the trials were a symbolic descent into death:

In constructing their characters, the makers of the *Die Zauberflöte* have shown great interest in gods and goddesses related to the ancient mystery religions...That they did so is quite natural since the opera itself represents a

mystery initiation. With these *mystery religions* we are dealing with a well-defined phenomenon. From the sixth century B.C. until well into the fourth century A.D. there existed the so-called *mystery culture* in the Greco-Roman world. Contrary to the official religion, which took place in public, these were secret cults. Their teachings were esoteric, and their rites were painstakingly kept secret. Becoming a member of such a group was only possible after a long preparatory period during which the candidate was subjected to all kinds of trials. After this process of purification we then have the festive initiation into the Mysteries. There were many locations where these ceremonies were celebrated. The best known was probably Eleusis, a town about twenty kilometers from Athens. Both towns were connected by the *sacred street* through which the procession traveled, taking about four hours. Exactly what took place during this initiation has been kept secret so successfully, that it is only through the allusions of several authors that we have at least some idea of what went on. Most likely the myths of the relevant deities were related, sung, recited or ritually performed. At times it was a spectacle for the benefit of those being initiated: for example, the *sacred wedding* or the *sacred sacrifice*. The fundamental meaning of the ritual was characterized by a symbolic descent into the dark underworld (often ceremonies did in fact take place in underground caves), in order to rise again from there into light. The various symbols had been adapted ever again to this journey from death to life, and every time this involved gods and goddesses who through mythology had to do with dying and resurrection.²¹⁰

Various passages in Act II reveal that death or a near-death experience is the destiny that awaits both Tamino and Pamina. Sometimes the language of these texts is symbolic, sometimes explicit. The first one is found in the Priest's chorus after Pamina's famous suicide aria in G minor: "Die düstre Nacht verscheucht der Glanz der Sonne. Bald fühlt der edle Jüngling neues Leben" (The brightness of the sun drives away the shades of night. Soon the noble youth will feel new life).

The second is in Tamino's and Pamina's farewell following this chorus.

PAMINA:
O, liebtest du, wie ich dich liebe,
Du würdest nicht so ruhig seyn.

TAMINO, SARASTRO:
O glaub', er fühlet/ich fühle gleiche
Triebe, Wird/Werd' ewig dein
Getreuer seyn/

PAMINA
You will not escape death,
My foreboding is to see you to the grave.

²¹⁰ Berk, *Alchemical Allegory*, 89.

TAMINO, SARASTRO:
 May the will of the gods be done,
 Their will shall be law to him/me.

Third, in the words of the 2 Armed Men: “Der, welcher wandert diese Strasse voll Beschwerde, Wird rein durch Feuer, Wasser, Luft und Erde. Wenn er des Todes Schrecken überwinden kann, Schwingt er sich von der Erde himmelan, Er wird verklärt, geläutert, licht und rein, Sich den Mysterien der Isis ganz zu weih'n” (He who wanders this path full of hardship Becomes pure through fire, water, air and earth. If he can overcome the terror of death, He lifts himself from the earth heavenwards, He becomes transfigured, purified, bright and clear, To dedicate himself completely to the Mysteries of Isis).

Fourth, in the dialogue between Tamino and Pamina, after Pamina is rescued by the Boys, who reunite her to Tamino just before he undergoes the death experience:

TAMINO
 Mich schreckt kein Tod, als Mann zu handeln,
 Den Weg der Tugend fort zu wandeln,
 Schliesst mir des Schreckens pforten auf!

Schliesst mir des Schreckens
 Pforten auf

Ich wage froh den kühnen Lauf.

PAMINA
 Tamino halt! ich muss dich sehn.

TAMINO
 Was hör ich? Paminens Stimme?
 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
 Ja, ja! das ist Paminens Stimme;

TAMINO, 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
 Wohl dir/mir, nun kann sie mit dir/mir gehn,
 Nun trennet euch/uns kein Schicksal mehr,
 Selbst wenn der Tod die Losung wär.

Wenn auch der Tod
 beschieden wär.

TAMINO
 Ist mir erlaubt mit ihr zu sprechen?
 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
 Dir sey erlaubt mit ihr zu sprechen.

Dir ist erlaubt mit ihr zu
 sprechen!

TAMINO, 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
 Welch Glück, wenn ihr euch/wir uns wiedersehn, [sic]

Welch Glück wenn wir
 euch/uns wiedersehn

Froh Hand in Hand in Tempel gehn.
 Ein Weib das Grab und Tod nicht scheut,
 Ist würdig der Unsterblichkeit.

Froh Hand in Hand im
 Tempel gehn
 Ein Weib das Nacht und Tod
 nicht scheut
 Ist würdig, und wird
 eingeweiht.

TAMINO
 Death does not frighten me from acting as a man,
 From setting forth on the path of virtue,
 Unlock for me the gates of terror!

Unlock for me the gates of
 terror

I happily risk the bold journey.

PAMINA
 Tamino, stop! I must see you.

TAMINO
 What do I hear? Pamina's voice?

2 ARMED MEN
 Yes, yes! that is Pamina's voice;

TAMINO, 2 ARMED MEN
 How wonderful, now she can go with you/me),
 Now no destiny can part you/us),
 Even if death were the signal.

Even if death were to
 be your/our) fate.

TAMINO
 Am I allowed to speak to her?

2 ARMED MEN
 You are allowed to speak to her.

You are allowed to
 speak to her!

TAMINO, 2 ARMED MEN
 What happiness when you/we) meet again,

What happiness when we
 meet again
 Walk happily hand in hand in
 the temple.

Walk happily hand in hand into the temple.

A woman who does not shun the grave and death

A woman who does not shun
 night and death

Is worthy of immortality.

Is worthy, and will be
 initiated.

Next, in the dialogue between Tamino and Pamina, as they enter death together:

TAMINO:
 Hier sind die Schreckens Pforten,
 Die Noth und Tod mir dräu'n.

PAMINA, TAMINO, 2 GEHARNISCHE MÄNNER
Ihr wandelt/Wir wandeln: durch des Tones Macht,
Froh durch des Todes düstre Nacht

TAMINO:
Here are the gates of terror,
Which threaten danger and death.

PAMINA, TAMINO, 2 ARMED MEN
Through the power of the sound you/we walk
Joyfully through the gloomy night of death

In Tamino's and Pamina's duet as they emerge from under the earth, that is, on the other side of death, the Flute leading them in C major:

<i>Der Flöte spielt</i>	
PAMINA, TAMINO	
Wir wandelten durch Feuergluthen, Bezähmten muthig die Gefahr. Gefahr	Bekämpften muthig die
Dein Ton sey Schutz in Wasserfluthen, So wie er es im Feuer war.	
Der Flöte spielt	
Ihr Götter, welch ein Augenblick! Gewährt ist uns der Weihe Glück.	Gewähret ist uns Isis Glück!

<i>The Flute plays</i>	
PAMINA, TAMINO	
We walked through burning fires, Bravely tamed the danger.	Bravely fought the danger
May your sound be protection in the water - torrents Just as it was in the fire.	
<i>The Flute plays</i>	
You gods, what a moment! The happiness of initiation is granted to us.	The happiness of Isis is granted us!

In the triumphal chorus that celebrates their emergence from death:

CHOR
Triumph! Triumph! du edles Paar!
Besieget hast du die Gefahr!
Geläutert bist du licht und rein!
Komm, tritt nun in den Tempel ein

CHORUS
Triumph! Triumph! You noble pair!

You have conquered the danger!
You are purified, bright and clear!
Come, step now into the temple.

And finally, in the final scene:

CHOR

Heil sey euch Geweihten! Ihr drangt durch die Nacht.
Dank sey dir Osiris. Dank, dir Isis gebracht.
Es siegte die Wahrheit, in himmlischem Glanz Strahlt
Wahrheit und Liebe dein ewiger Kranz

CHORUS

Hail to you, the initiated! You forged your way through the night.
Thanks be given to you, Isis and Osiris.
Truth triumphed, in heavenly brightness.
Your eternal garland streams truth and love.

DEATH: FACING THE SUN AT MIDNIGHT

"To die, that is to be initiated," Plato

It has been established that the cult of Isis and Osiris is intimately connected with the themes of death and rebirth, which in turn are closely associated with the belief of the immortality of the soul. Von Born states that "the awareness and the remembrance of death was something that was impressed very deeply upon the initiated."²¹¹ He also states that the immortality of the soul was elaborated in the Mysteries in Egypt, and that "it was out of the Mysteries that it was then transplanted to other peoples."²¹²

To demonstrate the extent of the hold that death had on the Egyptian psyche, von Born describes that "it was a custom of the Mysteries to carry around 'the' skeleton at their festival meals. This was also done at the annual memorial celebrations to recall Osiris, who had been killed by Typho and then found again. Some of these customs, part of annual celebrations, make us aware of some The Mysteries, even though they were kept in silence and secrecy. Even more telling and convincing is the prayer which the priest directs to Osiris, upon being summoned to one's deathbed: 'you eternal one, you who rule over everything under the body of the sun, you gods, you who have the power to give life and then to call it back, take me and bring me into the company of the elect.'"²¹³

Jan Assman states that "all the taboos and mysteries surrounding the god Osiris had something to do with death."²¹⁴ He states also that "in ancient Egypt, mortuary religion was not simply one area of cultural praxis among other, such as the cult of the gods, economy, law, politics, literature, and so forth. Rather, in this case, we are dealing with a center of cultural

²¹¹ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 60.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Assman, *Death and Salvation*, 190.

consciousness, one that radiated out into many – we might almost say, into all – other areas of ancient Egyptian culture. A comprehensive treatment of the theme of death can thus constitute an introduction to the essence of all ancient Egyptian culture.”²¹⁵ Evidence of this claim is substantiated by the abundance of ancient Egyptian archeological items that revolve around death, such as the Coffin Texts, The Pyramid Texts, tombs, mummies, etc.

An awareness of the motives in the myths that shaped *Die Zauberflöte* raises questions about Mozart’s own mental shift on the theme of death. Mozart began to see death as something to be desired, as revealed in a letter he wrote to his dying father. This letter, written in Vienna on April 4, 1787, was a response to the news that Leopold’s health had taken a sudden and fatal turn. In it, Mozart reveals that a shift had occurred in his own perception of death. The letter reads:

This very moment I have received a piece of news which greatly distresses me, the more so as I gathered from your last letter that, thank God, you were very well indeed. But now I hear that you are really ill. I need hardly tell you how greatly I am longing to receive some reassuring news from yourself. And I still expect it; although I have now made a habit of being prepared in all affairs of life for the worst. As death, when we come to consider it closely, is the true goal of our existence, I have formed during the last few years such close relations with this best and truest friend of mankind, that his image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling! And I thank my God for graciously granting me the opportunity (you know what I mean) of learning that death is the key which unlocks the door to our true happiness. I never lie down at night without reflecting that— young as I am—I may not live to see another day. Yet not one of all my acquaintances could say that in company I am morose or disgruntled. For this blessing I daily thank my Creator and wish with all my heart that each one of my fellow-creatures could enjoy it. In the letter which Madame Storace took away with her, I expressed my views on this point, in connection with the sad death of my dearest and most beloved friend, the Count von Hatzfeld.²¹⁶

Mozart’s shift in relation to death could have been aided by Moses Mendelssohn’s book *Phädon, or On the Immortality of the Soul*, found in Mozart’s personal library after his death. Mendelssohn was an eminent Jewish philosopher and a fellow Freemason. *Phädon* “presents

²¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

²¹⁶ Anderson, *Letters of Mozart*, 907-908.

the discussions of Socrates in his jail cell, in the final hours before his execution in 399 B.C.,” in which Socrates attempts to remove the fear of death through the teaching that the soul is disconnected from the body, and as a result, is immortal.²¹⁷ The shift in Mozart’s thinking about death is revealed in the words “I have formed during the last few years such close relations with this best and truest friend of mankind.” From the perspective of 1787, the “last few years” mentioned in this letter took place in Vienna, where Mozart lived from 1781 till his death in 1791.

Maynard Solomon argues that Mozart had not conquered the fear of death as completely as this letter seems to indicate. He writes that when Mozart’s mother died, Mozart “consoled himself with the thought that they would someday find blissful reunion: ‘We do not yet know when it will be—but that does not disturb me; when God wills it, I am ready.’ Thus, Mozart thought he was ready; but he was not ready. ‘Like all people with tender disposition, he also feared death very much,’ wrote [Georg] Nissen, perhaps on Constanze Mozart’s authority.”²¹⁸

Mozart’s words demonstrate how death used to fill him with terror until he began to see it as “the goal of our existence,” and “the key that unlocks the door to our true happiness.” Mozart’s shift has a meaning that goes beyond a rationalization; he does not appear to be evading something terrifying—he does not appear to be in a state of denial. Mozart’s musings on death are born of a philosophical transformation, a conversion, in which a previous source of terror becomes a source of comfort and consolation due to a philo-theological change.

One could assume that Mozart’s prior terror of death could have been simply a normal human response to the fear of death, or it could have arisen from a belief in the theology of hell, a tenet of the Roman Catholic Church of which he was a member. Two of Mozart’s last days’ works, the *Requiem* and *The Magic Flute*, composed just prior to his premature death deal with the subject of death, validating his preoccupation with death.

²¹⁷ Moses Mendelssohn, *Phädon, or On the Immortality of the Soul* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007), 3.

²¹⁸ Solomon, *Mozart – A life*, xi.

His own letters reveal that death was uppermost in his mind. He believed, for instance, that he was being poisoned, and confided as much to Constanze in one of their walks in the Prater: “I feel definitely that I will not last much longer; I am sure I have been poisoned. I cannot rid myself of this idea.”²¹⁹ Perhaps *Die Zauberflöte* and the *Requiem*, written in the last months of his life, were his way of dealing with his imminent death. The *Requiem*, reflecting the old terror at the thought of death, and *Die Zauberflöte*, representing his new view of death and immortality, the idea that “death is the goal of our existence,” “the key that unlocks the door to our true happiness.”

The Freemason circle to which Mozart belonged included members of the most influential social strata: royalty, aristocrats, intellectuals, scientists, poets, musicians and philosophers. Some of these were Goethe, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Joseph Haydn, Leopold Mozart, Ignaz von Born, Gottfried van Swieten, Adam Weishaupt, Emanuel Schikaneder, Anton Thun, and Moses Mendelssohn.²²⁰ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a prominent philosopher of the Enlightenment, was held in high regard by Ignaz von Born, Mozart’s Lodge grandmaster. Von Born believed that Lessing’s ideas were true Enlightenment ideals and Mozart certainly must have been acquainted with him as well.

In 1770, at age 41, Lessing took the post of librarian at the Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel where he became engaged in a heated controversy with Johann Melchior Goeze, a Lutheran pastor who condemned various proponents of the Enlightenment for disseminating anti-Christian ideas. One of Lessing’s exchanges with Goeze reveals that he also was in the process of shaking off the fear of death. This was due to his discovery of various religious and philosophical texts which changed his views on death. His exchange with Goeze is recorded in the book *Lessing’s Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment*:

²¹⁹ Helen Mautner, trans., *Mozart: The First Biography, By Franz Xaver Niemetschek* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 33.

²²⁰ The speech welcoming Mozart to the brotherhood stated: “Favorite of a guardian angel. Friend of the sweetest muse. Chosen by benevolent Nature to move our hearts through rare magical powers, and to pour consolation and comfort into our souls. – You shall be embraced by all the warm feelings of mankind, which you so wonderfully express through your fingers, through which stream all the magnificent works of your ardent imagination.” Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: a Life*. (Harper Collins, 2005), 321.

Having thus clarified their professional differences, Lessing goes on to make an earnest request, namely, that Goeze not interfere with what he does as a librarian, since he for his part has no wish to find fault with what Goeze does as a pastor. In response to Goeze's judgment day threat, Lessing declares that even if what he has published proves detrimental to Christianity, and even if he might be terrified at the moment of death, he will not be terrified at the prospect of death.²²¹

Toshimasa adds: "In any event, Lessing asserts that one does not have to overreact, as Goeze did, to the appearance of anti-Christian books. One can, in his opinion, trust with perfect serenity in the advance of the Christian religion."²²²

Toshimasa's summation of Lessing's attitude toward death, "even if he might be terrified at the moment of death, he will not be terrified at the prospect of death," has a striking resemblance to Mozart's own change in sentiments regarding his mortality. The Freemason ideology on death and on the immortality of the soul reveals that their teachings directly match both Lessing's and Mozart's emerging ideas regarding death. Lessing was also a close friend of Moses Mendelssohn, from whom he may have absorbed the same ideas.

Mackey's *Freemason Encyclopedia* contains a clear explanation of the doctrine. Not only does his description perfectly match Mozart's thoughts on the subject, it also provides an insight that helps us see that *Die Zauberflöte* itself is a dramatization of an initiation of death:

The Scandinavian, in their Edda, describing the residence of Death in Hell, where she was cast by her father, Loke, say that she there possesses large apartments, strongly built, and fenced with gates of iron. Her hall is Grief; her table, Famine; hunger, her knife; Delay, her servant; Faintness, her porch; Sickness and Pain, her bed; and her tent, Cursing and Howling. But the Masonic idea of death, like the Christians, is accompanied with no gloom, because it is represented only as a sleep, from whence we awaken into another life. Among the ancients, sleep and death were fabled as twins. Old Gorgias, when dying, said, "Sleep is about to deliver me up to his brother;" but the death-sleep of the heathen was a sleep from which there was no awaking. The popular belief was annihilation, and the poets and philosophers fostered the people's ignorance, by describing death as the total and irremediable extinction of life. Thus Seneca says – and he was too philosophic not to have known better – "that after death there comes nothing;" while Virgil, who doubtless had been initiated into the Mysteries of Eleusis, nevertheless call death "an iron sleep, and eternal night." Yet the Ancient Mysteries were based upon the dogma of eternal life, and their initiations were intended to represent a resurrection. Masonry, deriving its system of symbolic

²²¹ Toshimasa Yasukata, *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 50.

²²² *Ibid.*

teachings from these ancient religious associations, presents death to its neophytes as the gate or entrance to eternal existence. To teach the doctrine of immortality is the great object of the third degree. In its ceremonies we learn that life here is the time of labor, and that, working at the construction of a spiritual temple, we are worshipping the Grand Architect, for whom we build that temple. But we learn also that, when that life is ended, it closes only to open upon a newer and higher one, where, in a second temple and purer Lodge, the Mason will find eternal truth. Death, therefore, in Masonic philosophy, is the symbol of initiation completed, perfected, and consummated.²²³

Here we see that the great objective of the third degree is “to teach the doctrine of immortality.” Thus, Freemasonry presents “death to its neophytes as the gate of entrance to eternal existence.” As such they teach that “when that life is ended, it closes only to open upon a newer and higher one, where, in a second temple and purer Lodge, the Mason will find eternal truth. Death, therefore, in Masonic philosophy, is the symbol of initiation completed, perfected, and consummated.”

Albert Pike concurs with Mackey’s portrayal, but goes further, or rather, back to the Christian Church’s doctrine of hell. In the quote below he implies as much by saying that “since the soul is immortal, in some shape, suffering, pain, remorse, and agony, ever follow sin as its consequences.” Here are also disclosed that trials of fire and water such as those portrayed in *Die Zauberflöte* are intended to “purify” one “into immortality:”

The precise nature and details of the doctrines as to a future life, and rewards and punishments there, developed in the Mysteries, is in a measure uncertain. Little direct information in regard to it has come down to us...the Mysteries taught the doctrine of the soul’s immortality, and that, in some shape, suffering, pain, remorse, and agony, ever follow sin as its consequences.

Human ceremonies are indeed but imperfect symbols; and the alternate baptisms in fire and water intended to purify us into immortality, are ever in this world interrupted at the moment of their anticipated completion. Life is a mirror which reflects only to deceive, a tissue perpetually interrupted and broken, an urn forever fed, yet never full.

All initiation is but introductory to the great change of death. Baptism, anointing, embalming, obsequies by burial or fire, are preparatory symbols, like the initiation of Hercules before descending to the Shades, pointing out the mental change which ought to precede the renewal of existence. Death is the true initiation, to which sleep is the introductory or minor mystery. It is the final rite

²²³ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 230.

which united the Egyptian with his god, and which opens the same promise to all who are duly prepared for it.

The body was deemed a prison for the soul; but the latter was not condemned to eternal banishment and imprisonment. The Father of the Worlds permits its chains to be broken, and has provided in the course of Nature the means of its escape. It was a doctrine of immemorial antiquity, shared alike by Egyptians, Pythagoreans, the Orphici, and by that characteristic Bacchic Sage, “the Preceptor of the Soul,” Silenus, that death is far better than life; that the real death belongs to those who on earth are immersed in the Lethe of its passions and fascinations, and that the true life commences only when the soul is emancipated for its return.

And in this sense, as presiding over life and death, Dionysus is in the highest sense the LIBERATOR: since, like Osiris, he frees the soul, and guides it in its migrations beyond the grave, preserving it from the risk of again falling under the slavery of matter or of some inferior animal form, the purgatory of Metempsychosis; and exalting and perfecting its nature through the purifying discipline of his Mysteries. “The great consummation of all philosophy,” said Socrates, professedly quoting from traditional and mystic sources, “is Death.” He who pursues philosophy aright, is studying how to die.²²⁴

The sentiments that Mozart expressed to his dying father about death are echoed in the above text. This is the message of the opera as well. This is indicated by the Priests’ Chorus after Sarastro sends Tamino to be purified, at the end of Act 1, at the end of scene 19. The idea is that at death, “mortals immediately are gods,” and like them, they become immortal:

SARASTRO
Führt diese beiden Fremdlinge
In unsern Prüfungstempel ein,
Bedecket ihre Häupter dann
Sie müssen erst gereingt seyn.

CHOR
Wenn Tugend und Gerechtigkeit
Den Grossen Pfad mit Ruhm bestreut,

Dann ist die Erd’ ein Himmelreich,

Und Sterbliche den Göttern gleich.

Der Grossen Pfad mit Ruhm
bestreut

SARASTRO
Lead both these strangers
Into our temple of trials,
Then cover their heads
They must first be purified.

²²⁴ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 330-331.

CHORUS

When virtue and justice
Strews the broad path with fame,

Strews the path of the great with
fame

Then earth is a heavenly kingdom,
And mortals like gods.

Erik Hornung's *The Secret Lore of Egypt* provides an insight which might explain Mozart's change of mind regarding death. It may in particular explain why Mozart might have thought that death is the "goal of our existence" and "the key that unlocks the door to our true happiness:"

In the Hellenistic Mysteries, initiates entered into the solar course and gazed upon the "sun at midnight," the deepest of mysteries. In ancient Egypt, this glimpse was available to everyone, immediately upon crossing the threshold of death, for participation in the course of the sun meant ongoing regeneration for themselves as well as for the heavenly body, and they encountered the gods "face to face," as a harper's song in the tomb of Neferhotep puts it. We can interpret the nightly course of the sun as an initiatory route leading to human renewal; but it is characteristic that it is not travelled by the living. In the ancient Egyptian view, no one, not even Pharaoh himself, could become an Osiris during life; only death opened this possibility.²²⁵

The belief that death opens the possibility of regeneration and renewal made possible by an encounter with the gods, as well as becoming a god (becoming an Osiris), is enough to cause such a change of mind in regards to death.

It is obvious that if taken in the literal sense, the "sun at midnight" cannot have plausible meaning, for there is no such thing as a sun at midnight; thus its meaning must be symbolic. It is probable that Mozart was aware of the Egyptian belief that "initiates entered into the solar course and gazed upon the 'sun at midnight,'" for the penultimate scene of *Die Zauberflöte* depicts this "deepest of mysteries," as directed through the stage notes: "Suddenly the whole scene is transformed into a blaze of sunlight."²²⁶ The stage directions do not just call for "a blaze of light" but for a blaze of "sunlight" indicating a possible encounter with the "sun at midnight." The sun represents the gods, midnight represents death. Gazing upon the "sun at midnight" is a

²²⁵ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 15.

²²⁶ Pizzigoni, *The Magic Flute*, 191.

symbolic way of saying “looking at the gods at midnight,” that is, at the moment of darkest hour, at the moment of death. From Apuleius’ testimony we are told that this encounter involved “Celestial” and “Infernal” gods. An encounter face to face with the gods can be exhilarating or appalling depending on how you understand the gods to be.

Mozart obviously thought of it positively. If one believes that the soul lives on after death, coming “face to face” was something to look forward. In this scenario, death becomes the “the goal” of the life. Furthermore, there is a component of “regeneration” and “renewal” of human life involved in the act of facing the gods, according to the mystics. The Egyptians believed that life and energy came solely from a divine being, and that the only way for human beings to be reenergized would be to come into contact with the gods; therefore they looked forward to that event.

The cult of Osiris taught that death was a welcome goal because death offered the possibility of becoming an Osiris. Becoming an Osiris meant becoming a god. As indicated in the quote above however, it was only by going through death that one became an Osiris. Therefore, death becomes something to be desired, something to look forward to, “the goal of our existence.” In the opera, after Tamino passes through the purification trials, a symbolic death, he becomes a god, an Osiris.

Mozart’s own words hint that he was also looking forward to his own voyage to meet the gods face to face: “And I thank my God for graciously granting me the opportunity (you know what I mean) of learning that death is the key which unlocks the door to our true happiness.”

These beliefs offer a justification for Mozart’s new mindset about death, as well as an explanation for his great excitement about *Die Zauberflöte*. Understanding *Die Zauberflöte*’s theme of death and rebirth allows one to grasp the enigmatic remarks he wrote in the letter to Constanze where he distinguishes between those who merely “see” from those who “hear” the opera’s true message. It also helps one to gain greater insight into his impatience with the clueless *Bavarian*, who was obviously oblivious to the opera’s hidden significance.

ETERNAL JUDGMENT: PSYCHOSTASIA

Sarastro banishes the Queen of the Night, Monostatos, and the Three Ladies by a magical spell denoted by thunder, lightning and wind, and they sink into the ground. The music denotes their descent into the underworld, “ewige nacht” (eternal night):

813 (versinken)

-stür - zet in e - wi - ge Nacht! - (□)

-stür - zet in e - wi - ge Nacht! - (□)

-stür - zet in e - wi - ge Nacht! - (□)

-stür - zet in e - wi - ge Nacht! - (□)

The musical score consists of six staves. The top four staves are vocal parts for four voices, each with the lyrics "-stür - zet in e - wi - ge Nacht! - (□)". The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, and the sixth staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is marked with a fermata over the final note of the vocal parts, indicating a long, sustained sound.

By this act, Sarastro establishes himself as judge of another domain: eternity. The scene opens with Monostatos, the Queen and the Three Ladies quietly entering the Temple of Wisdom. Their motive is to obliterate the members of the order, the “frömmeler” (bigots) “mit Feuersglut und machtgem Schwert” (with blazing fire and sword). Monostatos has allied himself to the Queen through the enticement of receiving Pamina as reward.

Sarastro reveals the reason for his action when he calls the vanished group “Heuchler” (dissemblers or hypocrites). Sarastro condemns the so-called forces of darkness, “the night,” and deems them deserving of death, for they were hypocrites. The system of reward and punishment enters the arena of eternal judgment, which can be effortlessly traced as a major

component of all recorded ancient and modern religions. Von Born states that the idea that such an eternal punishment existed evolved from the teachings of the immortality of the soul:

The philosophy or the idea that good and evil minded persons would after this life face either some punishment or some reward was introduced to the peoples under the teaching of the soul's wonderings. They demonstrated and taught that just as in former times the souls of the highest kings and of the most noble men had been transformed and transplanted into the stars and the constellations in the same manner the souls of men after their merit they would inhabit the bodies of good or evil animals, and would be wondering about in those animal bodies.²²⁷

In Egypt, Psychostasia, the weighing of the soul, was a ritual in which the dead were judged in a balance. This judgment was arbitrated by Osiris and seven other judges inside the Hall of Double Righteousness, a likely reference to the two components of the law of opposing forces, good and evil. In this ritual, the deceased's heart was extracted and weighed against the ostrich feather, *Maat*. The weighing of a person's action in life determined whether the deceased was worthy of reward (eternal life with the creator god) or punishment (nonexistence, also described by them as the second death). The Egyptian belief in this judgment scene was the source of inspiration for many of the texts from which Egyptologists extracted the ancient beliefs. One such text, the Negative Confessions found in the Papyrus of Ani, exemplify the fear inspired by the judgment of the dead:

Hail, Usekh-nemmt, who comest forth from Anu, I have not committed sin.
 Hail, Hept-khet, who comest forth from Kher-aha, I have not committed robbery with violence.
 Hail, Fenti, who comest forth from Khemenu, I have not stolen.
 Hail, Am-khaibit, who comest forth from Qernet, I have not slain men and women.
 Hail, Neha-her, who comest forth from Rasta, I have not stolen grain.
 Hail, Ruruti, who comest forth from heaven, I have not purloined offerings.
 Hail, Arfi-em-khet, who comest forth from Suat, I have not stolen the property of God.
 Hail, Neba, who comest and goest, I have not uttered lies.
 Hail, Set-qesu, who comest forth from Hensu, I have not carried away food.
 Hail, Utu-nesert, who comest forth from Het-ka-Ptah, I have not uttered curses.

²²⁷ Born, "Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier," 60.

Hail, Qerri, who comest forth from Amentet, I have not committed adultery, I have not lain with men.

Hail, Her-f-ha-f, who comest forth from thy cavern, I have made none to weep.

Hail, Basti, who comest forth from Bast, I have not eaten the heart.

Hail, Ta-retiu, who comest forth from the night, I have not attacked any man.

Hail, Unem-snef, who comest forth from the execution chamber, I am not a man of deceit.

Hail, Unem-besek, who comest forth from Mabit, I have not stolen cultivated land.

Hail, Neb-Maat, who comest forth from Maati, I have not been an eavesdropper.

Hail, Tenemiu, who comest forth from Bast, I have not slandered [no man].

Hail, Sertiu, who comest forth from Anu, I have not been angry without just cause.

Hail, Tutu, who comest forth from Ati, I have not debauched the wife of any man.

Hail, Uamenti, who comest forth from the Khebt chamber, I have not debauched the wife of [any] man.

Hail, Maa-antuf, who comest forth from Per-Menu, I have not polluted myself.

Hail, Her-uru, who comest forth from Nehatu, I have terrorized none.

Hail, Khemiu, who comest forth from Kau, I have not transgressed [the law].

Hail, Shet-kheru, who comest forth from Urit, I have not been wroth.

Hail, Nekhenu, who comest forth from Heqat, I have not shut my ears to the words of truth.

Hail, Kenemti, who comest forth from Kenmet, I have not blasphemed.

Hail, An-hetep-f, who comest forth from Sau, I am not a man of violence.

Hail, Sera-kheru, who comest forth from Unaset, I have not been a stirrer up of strife.

Hail, Neb-heru, who comest forth from Netchfet, I have not acted with undue haste.

Hail, Sekhriu, who comest forth from Uten, I have not pried into matters.

Hail, Neb-abui, who comest forth from Sauti, I have not multiplied my words in speaking.

Hail, Nefer-Tem, who comest forth from Het-ka-Ptah, I have wronged none, I have done no evil.

Hail, Tem-Sepu, who comest forth from Tetu, I have not worked witchcraft against the king.

Hail, Ari-em-ab-f, who comest forth from Tebu, I have never stopped [the flow of] water.

Hail, Ahi, who comest forth from Nu, I have never raised my voice.

Hail, Uatch-rekhit, who comest forth from Sau, I have not cursed God.

Hail, Neheb-ka, who comest forth from thy cavern, I have not acted with arrogance.

Hail, Neheb-nefert, who comest forth from thy cavern, I have not stolen the bread of the gods.

Hail, Tcheser-tep, who comest forth from the shrine, I have not carried away the khenfu cakes from the Spirits of the dead.

Hail, An-af, who comest forth from Maati, I have not snatched away the bread of the child, nor treated with contempt the god of my city.

Hail, Hetch-abhu, who comest forth from Ta-she, I have not slain the cattle belonging to the god.²²⁸

In the *Oldest Books in the World: An account of the Religion, Wisdom, Philosophy... of the Ancient Egyptians*, Isaac Meyer describes this Egyptian judgment scene, including picture representations. See Plates IX and X in Appendix A. Meyer shares illuminating insight into the Egyptian psyche as it pertains to their all-consuming fear due to their belief in the concept of divine eternal retribution. The following excerpt is from a Chapter titled “Psychostasia, or Judgment, of the Soul of the Dead:”

The scene of the Psychostasia or Trial of the earthly conduct of the dead, in the Future-world is very important because of the knowledge it gives of the religion of the Ancient Egyptians. It shows the existence with them of a belief in a judgment, after death, of the soul or conscience; for man's actions committed whilst in life upon this earth; that his good and evil deeds were thought to originate and reside in his heart; that man had while on earth free will in his actions; that his heart, emblem of his conscience, was after death, mystically weighed by Thoth, symbol of the intellectual part of his spiritual nature; that he was subject to the accusation and opposition of a demon, for actions done while in life on this earth, and after a decree against him to punishment by such demon and his followers. That there were certain specific faults and crimes for which he was liable to such punishment, and these his Ka was obliged to state and show his freedom from, before the Forty-two assisting judges of Osiris, the death of the dead; that these faults and crimes are mentioned in the Confessions, in the Book termed by Dr. Lepsius, No. cxxv of the Book of the Dead, of which Chapter or Book the scene of the Psychostasia is part; and that in number they were not less than forty-two. The Ma or Maat i.e. Harmony, Law, Truth, Righteousness, likely including an idea similar to the modern idea of the Kosmos, and of that order which is conspicuous in the movement of the heavenly bodies, was believed to be the norm of the entire universe; that the principal desire of the Ancient Egyptian was for his spiritual resurrection from the dead, and an eternal future happy spiritual life in the Egyptian heaven, with perfect liberty to go where he desired: an absence of all punishment, and especially freedom from the danger of annihilation of his spiritual existence, by the ‘Second death.’²²⁹

In reading Meyer's description, a parallel to the Masonic terminology comes to mind in reference to such terms as “Harmony, Law, Truth, and Righteousness.” “True Harmony” was the

²²⁸ E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani, Egyptian Book of the Dead* (New Vision Publications, 2007), 89-90. http://books.google.com/books?id=FJhNPgAACAAJ&dq=E.A.+Wallis+Budge,+The+Papyrus+of+Ani,+Egyptian+Book+of+the+Dead&hl=en&sa=X&ei=yC3ST_i3F4Po2QW7s-ChDw&ved=oCDoQ6AEwAA [Accessed September 14, 2011]

²²⁹ Meyer, *Oldest Books in the World*, 415.

name of Viennese lodge of which Ignaz von Born was the grand master and which Mozart often visited. “Truth” was another lodge in Vienna, founded in 1786. This is the identical vocabulary used by the Masons.

The above account confirms the dual moral law and its punishment requirements, enforced by demons. The Psychopomp, conductor of the soul through the underworld, accompanied the dead through the judgment and beyond. Thoyt was also a scribe and messenger of the gods. Hornung writes that Thoth wrote and revealed what is referred to as “The Mysteries” in the “divine book,” the “Book of Two Ways.”²³⁰

Thoth was the embodiment of wisdom and he was depicted as having violent traits: “As ‘lord of foreign countries’ and ‘lord of slaughter, who overthrows Asia’ (thus in Wadi Kharig in the Sinai), he was credited with trampling foes underfoot and assisting the king in ‘smiting the enemies.’ In the Pyramid Texts (§§ 962-63), he lops off heads and cuts out hearts.”²³¹ Thoth is “also a judge and messenger of the gods, as well as the guardian of the Eye of Horus,” “and his wings assist the deceased in ascending to the sky.”²³² Thoth was thought to be the embodiment of wisdom, but he smites his enemies and also cuts out their hearts. Thoth had wings to assist human beings to pass into death.

Hornung goes on to say that Thoth “united in himself the contradictory essences of these eternally combating brothers [HORUS AND SETH], between whom he constantly mediated.”²³³ The contradicting “essences” of Horus and Seth (Typho) are said to provide a symmetry that causes balance and harmony between good and evil:

Seth, the embodiment of disorder, was predominantly seen as a rival of Horus, a would-be usurper who assassinated Osiris and was defeated; Seth was also portrayed in a balanced complementarity with Horus, so that the pair of them represented a bipolar, balanced embodiment of kingship. Thus, on the side of the

²³⁰ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 5.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

throne, Horus and Seth—symmetrical and equal—tie the papyrus and lotus around the *sema*-sign (*sm*; “unity”).²³⁴

The Divine Book of Thoth is mentioned in the Coffin Texts, which were “religious spells written on the coffins of officials of the Middle Kingdom.”²³⁵ In these texts Thoth is portrayed as being “the author of sacred writings...the lord of wisdom (V5-6 all-knowing) and lord of rituals and offerings... he was connected with magic... his judicial function makes him the protector of the legal system... he was regarded as the deity responsible for all culture and invention... He functioned as scribe whenever divine documents – letters, decrees, testaments – had to be written, and as ‘lord of the divine words,’ he was responsible for the Egyptian writing system. He also oversaw the calendar and the measurement of time ... in many scenes to be found in temples, he writes the name of the king on the leaves of the sacred *ished*-tree.”²³⁶ Hornung goes on to say that “in the depictions of the Judgment of the Dead, he records the results, and sometimes tends to the scale.”²³⁷ In this judgment, the deceased’s actions were weighed on the balances found in the Hall of Double Righteousness, actions which are deemed good or evil according to how the balances tipped. The legal system was under Thoth’s protectorate, and the court system was the main means by which reward and punishment are enforced. Thoth was perceived as knowing all Mysteries and comprehending human and divine nature but his domain was limited to the law of contrary forces.

G. D. Hornblower tracks the judgment scene of psychostasia as first originating in Egypt and then permeating all cultures and religions, from Hellenism to Christianity to Islam. He also identifies Osiris as the mighty umpire of the soul. Osiris’ role as umpire of the soul was later taken up by St. Mercurius. Throughout history there have been a series of archetypical reincarnations of the “mighty umpire of the soul,” the one who weighed humanity’s fate in the

²³⁴ Edmund S. Meltzer, “Horus” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. Ed. Donald B. Redford, Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001 University of Washington. 25 April 2011 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t176.e0323>>

²³⁵ Hornung, *Secret Lore of Egypt*, 6.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

balances. Although the name of the “umpire” changed according to times and cultures, his essential role as “judge” did not:

As the name [psychostasia] shows, it was “lives” that were weighed up, or “souls,” and in primitive thought a religious idea is easily connected with these vague entities. Another name was kerostasia, “weighing of fates,”...of ‘spirits of the dead... This fragment of eschatology must have been a matter of general belief, for it is recorded by Homer who, with Leschylus, made Zeus the umpire, and it continued till the full Hellenic age, when it was spread abroad on such articles of wide commerce as Attic pottery; its position in popular thought is well illustrated by the comic allusion to it in the Frogs of Aristophanes. Hermes may have been finally adopted as umpire on account of his function as Psychopompos, “conductor of souls,” to their future world. The general idea may well have originated in Egyptian pictures which reached the Greeks, who did not, however, learn their whole meaning; for them it was the mere weighing of fates, devoid of purely moral implications, of which, nevertheless, it bore the dormant seeds which had a vigorous sprouting in after times, especially in Christianity. For there we find the archangel Michael, scion of both Orient and the West, deputy in many matters for the Almighty, acting not only as Leader of the Heavenly Hosts but also as the great Angel of the Dead, and Conductor of their souls to Paradise, but not till he had weighed them in his scales-in fact, like Hermes, both Psychopompos and Weigher of Fates... This inheritance of functions seems to have originated in the early Christianity of the Near East, which confused him with Hermes or Mercury, as general theory has done till now...The seed-bed may have been in Egypt, for there...St. Mercurius largely replaced Osiris in the popular mind, and Osiris had been the mighty Umpire at the soul- weighing; thus we may here have gained an illuminating glance into the mechanism of the fusion of new with old at the replacement of one religious system of beliefs by another. A very modern incarnation of the myth has been kindly brought to my notice by Professor Myers who witnessed it in the streets of Athens in 1893, during Carnival, and published it, with illustrations, under the title “The Miser’s Doom”...The miser died, his soul was extracted, then weighed and found wanting, and underwent its due torture, all at the hands of strolling mummers. The idea of angels of inquisition for the souls of the dead was further engrafted on Islam in its dread pair, Munkir and Nakeer.²³⁸

²³⁸ Hornblower , “The Egyptian Fertility-Rite,” 28.

THE MASONIC CONFIRMATION

In *Die Zauberflöte* the moral law of contrary forces is perpetuated by Sarastro, of whom the priests say: “Long live Sarastro, reigning in wisdom, who punishes just as wisely as he rewards.”

Von Born, who helped fashion the libretto, provides some evidence that Freemasonry was an “almost exact parallel” to the priesthood of ancient Egypt:

Besides the similarity of the hieroglyphics and our tablets, the knowledge of the Egyptian priests being expressed that way, there is a lot of similarity, or almost exact parallel, between our order and that of the Egyptian priesthood. The different guilds of the priests, which were distributed into the different temples of the country, shared the same constitution, furnishings, and teachings. They were not allowed to change anything in their ceremonies which were passed on from hand to hand. Even when they were suffering under the rule of foreign rulers, they continued to practice all that. Our laws do not permit us under any circumstances to change anything in our works. We too make sure that there is unity in our ceremonies and customs and that nothing is changed. Our eagerness to do all this may even grow more if we are persecuted.²³⁹

Masons of the eighteenth century adapted certain elements of the Egyptian rites and beliefs to fit their Enlightenment and Catholic worldview. The relationship between Egypt and *Die Zauberflöte* might have contained some outward parallels, that is to say, similarities in procedures and customs. More significantly, however, von Born indicates that Freemasons of his time adopted the Egyptian symbolic corpus as well as their foundational principles.

The purpose of Von Born’s whole research was to show these similarities between ancient Egypt and Freemasonry, which were the focal point of his research: “Before I get to these comparisons [between ancient Egypt and Freemasonry], which are the actual purpose of all my research until now, I want to repeat that everything that pertained to the Mysteries had a threefold purpose: moral, historical and mystic.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 113.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 85.

The fourth and last section of *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier* outlines many of the parallels between ancient Egypt and Freemasonry. One such comparison reveals his eagerness to establish a commonality between the two:

The murdering of Osiris and the coffin that is surrounded by the bush and the careful searching of the body; the blows to the picture column of Typho, and the mourning, the acting out, not in words because they have the code of silence, but in mimes, the priests showing in their gestures, in how they carried themselves, the recovery of the body that is without its soul in the moonshine and the joy of the priests to have made this discovery, all this can be compared with the memorial celebrations for the master of our lodge, the death of our beloved master Adonixam, and we can compare it with the sympathy that is expressed as we speak witness to his widow, and we can compare it with the branch of the acacia, and the three strikes, which the newly installed master receives; and with the searching for the special light, the searching for the directives that concern the special light and then with the jubilation and the joy of the brothers to have rediscovered the lost master word.²⁴¹

The most significant principle of the Mysteries that comes to the forefront in *Die Zauberflöte*, the “special light” which pertains to wisdom this thesis has discussed so far, is the law of opposing forces.

The following excerpts from Pike’s work contain elements that are analogous to the precepts that form the dual moral law explored in this thesis:

At the same time that we judge that a free agent has done a good or a bad act, we form another judgment, as necessary as the first; that if he has done well, he deserves compensation; if ill, punishment ... That judgment may be expressed in a manner more or less vivid, according as it is mingled with sentiments more or less ardent. Sometimes it will be a merely kind feeling toward a virtuous agent, and moderately hostile to a guilty one; sometime enthusiasm or indignation ... The judgment of merit and demerit is intimately connected with the judgment of good and evil... Merit is the natural right which we have to be rewarded; demerit the natural right which others have to punish us... Reward accorded to merit is a debt; without merit it is an alms or a theft ... The Good is good in itself, and to be accomplished, whatever the consequences... Virtue without happiness, and crime without misery, is a contradiction and disorder ... This law that attaches pleasure and sorrow to the good and the evil, is, in general, accomplished even here below... To the moral law in the reason of man, corresponds liberty in action. Liberty is deduced from obligation, and is a fact irresistibly evident. Man, as free, and subject to obligation, is a moral person; and that involves the idea of rights. To these ideas is added that of merit and demerit, which supposes the distinction

²⁴¹ Ibid., 125.

between good and evil, obligation and liberty; and creates the idea of reward and punishment.²⁴²

It is significant that the above quote includes the theme of reward and punishment and refers to it as a law: “This law that attaches pleasure and sorrow to the good and the evil, is, in general, accomplished even here below.”

In the next section Albert Pike provides further insight into the dual law:

The distinction of the two Principles was admitted in all the Theologies, and formed one of the principal bases of all religions. It entered as a primary element into the sacred fables, the cosmogonies and the Mysteries of antiquity... The harmony of the Universe is a combination of contraries, like the stings of a lyre, or that of a bow, which alternately is stretched and relaxed.” “The good,” says Euripides, “is never separated from the Evil ... The two must mingle, that all may go well.” ... “And this opinion as to the two principles, continues Plutarch, is that of all antiquity. From the Theologians and Legislators it passed to the Poets and Philosophers. Its author is unknown, but the opinion itself is established by the traditions of the whole human race, and consecrated in the Mysteries and sacrifices both of the Greeks and Barbarians, wherein was recognized the dogma of opposing principles in nature, which, by their contrariety, produce the mixture of good and evil ... We must admit two contrary causes, two opposing powers, which lead, one to the right and the other to the left, and thus control our life ... This doctrine ... has been generally received by most nations, and especially by those who have had the greatest reputation for wisdom ... All have admitted two gods, with different occupations, one making the good and the other the evil found in nature. The former has been styled “God,” the latter “Demon ...”²⁴³

Pike’s statement, “The distinction of the two Principles was admitted in all the Theologies, and formed one of the principal bases of all religions. It entered as a primary element into the sacred fables, the cosmogonies and the Mysteries of antiquity,” is in accord with the Egyptian belief that *Maat*, the name the ancient Egyptians gave to the dual law, encompassed the entire human experience. The sentence, “This doctrine ... has been generally received by most nations, and especially by those who have had the greatest reputation for wisdom,” provides us with an insight into Sarastro himself, who in the opera indeed is portrayed having “the greatest reputation for wisdom.”

²⁴² Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 607-609.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 555-556.

One last excerpt shall confirm that one of the main purposes of Freemasonry is indeed the promotion of the law of contrary forces. Below, this law is labeled the “ROYAL SECRET” of the royal brotherhood, and is directed to those adepts who qualify to be a “Prince.” The “ROYAL SECRET” is referred to as “balance,” “equilibrium,” “harmony,” the “law of cause and consequence,” the “highest order of the universe,” descriptions which are reminiscent of *Maat*. The “The ROYAL DECREE” is the final indoctrination in the Masonic order. It is directed to the thirty-third degree, the last degree of the order:

The ROYAL SECRET, of which you are Prince, if you are a true Adept, if knowledge seems to you advisable, and Philosophy is, for you, radiant with a divine beauty, is that which the Sohar terms The Mystery of the BALANCE...by which vices and base actions, and ungenerous thoughts and words are crimes and wrongs, justly punished by the law of cause and consequence.²⁴⁴

From the teachings of the Freemasons it is apparent that they were not only aware, but that they believed and promoted the dual moral law as the law of order and harmony at work in the universe. The dual principle sits at the core of the morality that permeates the secret society that Mozart joined in 1784. Thus, one may deduce that the impetus behind *Die Zauberflöte* falls in line with this body of philosophy, especially since the libretto was created in collaboration with fellow Freemasons.

Jean Starobinski summarizes what the dual principle meant to the Freemasons. He does not refer to it as such, but rather to the flute, and the harmony (orchestrated by the balance of good and evil), it is able to bring into the world:

To them, the flute signified harmony, and not only the harmony of the couple, but, much more fundamentally, the harmony of the world. As the fundamental ordering principle, harmony is power par excellence. It is through harmony that chaos can become an order. In his theoretical works, Jean- Philippe Rameau repeatedly made the point that “the law of harmonic generation” produced by the vibration of the sonorous body was the fundamental secret of the cosmos: from it, all other proportions derived, whether geometrical, optical, or moral. Freemasonry generalized this idea...harmony represents the law of the world and the moral rule...²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 724-725.

²⁴⁵ Starobinski, “The Magic Flute,” 417-418.

Finally, as Pike describes a supernatural force whose “Supreme law” is characterized by the equilibrium of opposing forces, one is reminded of the flute and its promise of “protection, support in times of the greatest misfortune, all-powerful control over human behavior, the ability to transform people’s suffering turning sadness into joy, changing loneliness into love, increasing happiness and satisfaction.” The Three Ladies’ promise that through the flute Tamino would have the ability to become all powerful is echoed in these words:

There is in nature one most potent force, by means whereof a single man, who could possess himself of it, and should know how to direct it, could revolutionize and change the face of the world. This force was known to the ancients. It is a universal agent, whose Supreme law is equilibrium...and whereby, if science can but learn how to control it, it will be possible to change the order of the Seasons, to produce in night the phenomena of day, to send a thought in an instant round the world, to heal or slay at a distance, to give our words universal success, and make them reverberate everywhere...There is a Life-Principle of the world, a universal again wherein are two natures and a double current, of love and wrath. This ambient fluid penetrates everything. It is a ray detached from the glory of the Sun, and fixed by the weight of the atmosphere and the central attraction.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 616.

Mystical Symbols Translated into Musical Language

To understand *Die Zauberflöte's* multiple figurative meanings, a clear relationship between Mozart's sources and the symbols employed must be established. The first of these connections is made between Freemasonry and the gods of ancient Egypt. The second is the common bond between the dualistic principle of ancient Egyptian religion and the Freemason moral code.

It is in connection to the principle of polar opposites that the musical symbolism of *Die Zauberflöte* gains greater significance. In this context the purification trials of water and fire gain their intended meaning, and Mozart's use of three repeated chords begins to make sense. Thus the symbols employed in ancient Egypt shed light on the symbolism in *Die Zauberflöte*.

Ignaz von Born points out a few of the symbols that represented the duality based principle of good/evil. For the most part, just as the principle is dual, so the symbols that represent it come in pairs, like the sun and the moon. Water and fire symbolize the same thing, and so do the downward and upright triangles. The exception is the number three, but according to von Born, it represents the same principle.

THE IDEA OF BALANCE

The supposed balance between light and darkness is expressed in the opera through Sarastro and the Queen of the Night. Sarastro and the Queen respectively represent the good and the evil principle. Sarastro embodies good, beneficence, the passive principle, and all that is good for mankind. He wears the Circle of the Sun, which is not the same as the destructive fire; the downward triangle, a symbol of water, also applies to him.

The Queen stands for evil, the active principle; the symbol of the upward triangle, destructive fire, represents her. The Queen's relationship to the evil principle, as it relates to

punishment, is active, while Typho's, Monostatos' is passive. The Queen doles out punishment, Monostatos receives it. Ultimately Sarastro, the Queen, and Monostatos represent a unity, a godhead like that of Osiris, Isis, and Typho. While Osiris is beneficent, he must also keep order, therefore he also doles out punishment, as does Sarastro.

Hence, it is between the two archetypes, Sarastro and the Queen, that one would expect to find balance. Both Sarastro and the Queen have two major arias. In the first act, the Queen sings first, "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren"—B flat Major, G minor, B flat Major. Sarastro opens Act II with *O Isis und Osiris*, in F Major. The Queen then sings "Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen"—in the relative minor. The keys of these two arias denote an opposing duality: Sarastro, Sun and water, sings in F Major; the Queen, darkness and fire, in d minor. Sarastro then sings "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" in E Major. This aria directly follows "Der Hölle Rache," shifting the tonality from D minor to E major. The two arias oppose minor and major, flat and sharp, high and low tessitura.

Balance is also seen in other ways. The side of "good" has three beneficent guiding spirits, (the Three Boys) and the "evil" camp has three evil guiding spirits (the Three Ladies). At the end of the opera there are two marriages: Tamino/Pamina and Papageno/Papagena. There are two instruments of magic, the flute and the bells. There are two overarching purposes to the morality of the opera: to promote virtue through rewards and to curb vice through punishment.

THE NUMBER THREE

The number three had great import for both ancient Egyptians and Freemasons, and its significance is related to the symbolism related to odd and even numbers, the Monad and the Dyad. Von Born states that "the number three is a holy sacred number for us and it was thus with the Egyptians. The even numbers they considered unlucky as we do. But the number three was good luck because, as Plutarch says, it is the first odd number and yet it is a complete

number.”²⁴⁷ Von Born indicates that the number three added a “spirit” dimension to God: “Gods’ almighty power is the number three because it is the spirit, and the universe is made of both spirit and material. The Egyptians compared the universe with a perfect triangle.”²⁴⁸

The Freemasons also repeat the number three, three times (3X3). Mackey states, under the entry for the word “greeting:” “This word means salutation, and under the form of ‘Thrice Greeting,’ it is very common at the head of Masonic documents. ... In Masonic documents it is sometimes found in the form of S.. S .. S .. , which three letters are the initials of the Latin word *salute* or health, three times repeated, and therefore equivalent to ‘Thrice Greeting.’”²⁴⁹ This “Thrice Greeting” had its origins in Hermes Trismegistus, the “Thrice Great.”

The number three is also connected with the concept of the “three blows.” Von Born mentions it in the context of the celebration of the murdering of Osiris and the coffin that is surrounded by the bush, the symbolic tree of life:

With one of these memorial celebrations there was a picture column of one of their gods that got damaged, but Herodotus believed that the old secrecy that had been entrusted to him and could not divulge the name of the god or he would have gone against the secrecy laws. It’s pretty easy to guess that it was the picture of Typho that the priests had damaged with blows in order to have revenge because of the murdering of Osiris.²⁵⁰

The “three blows” are used when a new master is installed, and appears to be something he receives during the installation ceremony. The number three appears at the opening of the overture, in the form of three ascending triadic chords. In the opera, these appear as three “blasts,” and are the very first notes of the entire work. They set the tone that the opera is a

²⁴⁷ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 116.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 311.

²⁵⁰ Born, “Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier,” 124.

grand symbolic installation, the installation of Tamino as heir of the Circle of the Sun. Both Overture sections begin with a set of three ascending triads:

Overture, part 1:

Overture, part 2:

The “thrice greeting” chords are heard again at the beginning of Act 2, interspersed between speaking lines. This is the occasion of the Order’s acceptance (installation) of Tamino, the Prince who will “reward virtue and punish vice.” This time the three chords are played three times (3x3) in the same key, B flat, as in the overture, above.

WATER – THE GOOD PRINCIPLE

Osiris, the beneficent king, was not only a symbol of the sun, but of all beneficent things, including water. The sun did not have the same destructive meaning as fire, evil, did. In the opera this role is played by Sarastro. Water moves in the opposite direction of fire, weaving itself

in a downward descent, seeking the lowest possible point. It represents the good, passive, suffering, beneficent, virtuous side of the moral principle. Sarastro's arias portray the serenity of water, the opposite of the Queen's fiery turbulence. His first aria is a prayer to Isis and Osiris for safety for Tamino and Pamina as they pass through the purification trials:

Adagio

O I - sis und O - si - ris,

Tutti *p*

The downward motion of his melodic line is especially apparent, mimicking water's downward motion, as the aria ends. Sarastro's vocal range is the opposite of the Queen's, highlighting their polar stance. He descends to low F:

42

eu - ren Wohn-sitz auf! - nehmt sie in eu - ren Wohn-sitz auf! (134)

Sarastro's second aria comes right after he saves Pamina from Monostatos' third and last attempt to take her by force. As in his first aria, this one also depicts calm, benevolence, and goodness:

Larghetto

1. In die - sen heil' - gen Hal - len kennt
2. In die - sen heil' - gen Mau - ern, wo

Archi *p* *f* **Tutti** *p* Fl.

FIRE – THE EVIL PRINCIPLE

The negative principle is represented by the Queen, Isis, the counterpart of Osiris in the duality system. The Queen's two arias portray the fire principle. Her music is characterized by shimmering, sparkling melodies that reach upward like flames of fire, fast, turbulent rhythms, and sharp, jagged intervallic jumps. The Queen's music is passionate, burning with intensity. Fire represents destruction but also divine retribution, revenge, justice, all of which are characteristic of Isis.

The Queen's first entrance is announced by a brief introduction portraying the solemn procession of a monarch, a possible allusion to the unveiling of Isis:

Allegro maestoso

Oboe I, II
Fagotto I, II
Corno I, II
Archi

Archi *p* +Cor. +Fag. *cresc.*

f **Tutti**

The first notes of her recitative form an upward triad [upward triangle, symbol of fire] on B flat, D, and F:

Recitativo
KÖNIGIN DER NACHT

O zitt-re nicht, mein lie-ber Sohn,

+ Ob.
+ Fag.

Archi
p

p *cresc.* *f* Tutti
sf

The aria begins in G minor as the Queen laments the loss of her daughter: “Zum Leiden bin ich auserkohren: Ach meine Tochter fehlet mir; Mit ihr ging all’ mein Glück verlohren” (I am destined for suffering: Ah, I miss my daughter; With her vanished all my happiness):

20

Andante

Mut-ter-herz zu trö-sten.- Zum Lei-den bin ich aus-er-ko-ren,

Viol.

Archi
p *mf*

The fast section of the aria begins again with the upward triad on B flat, D, and F. The ascending triad is sung to the words “Du, du, du” (You, you, you). There is no reticence to the Queen’s request that Tamino rescue her daughter, which is more like a command than a plea for help. She is adamant, insistent, forceful:

Allegro moderato

schwach. Du, du,

f *Tutti* *Archi p*

38
65

du wirst sie zu be-frei-en ge - - hen,

Her melody flickers like fire, always reaching up. Her melodic line reiterates the upward triadic three-note pattern, B flat, D, and F, before the trill:

88

Archi

91

auf e - wig

+ Cor.

The Queen's second and best-known aria portrays fiery revenge and retribution, as the words confirm:

KÖNIGINN DER NACHT

Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen;
Tod und Verzweiflung tobten um mich her,

Tod und Verzweiflung
flammet um mich her!

Fühlt nicht durch dich Sarastro Todesschmerzen,
Bist du mein Kind, bist mir nicht Tochter mehr.

So bist du, Nein! meine

Tochter nimmermehr:
Verstossensey auf ewig! Verlassen sey auf ewig!
Zertrümmert sey auf ewig alle Bande der Natur,

Zertrümmert seyn auf ewig
alle Bande der Natur,

Wenn nicht durch dich Sarastro wird erblassen!
Hört! Rachegötter! Hört! der Mutter Schwur!

QUEEN OF NIGHT

The vengeance of hell boils in my heart;
Death and despair rage around me,

Death and despair burns
around me!

If Sarastro doesn't feel through you the pains of death
You are my child, my daughter no more.

So you are, no! my daughter
nevermore:

Be cast off forever! Be deserted forever!
All ties of nature be destroyed forever,

All ties of nature be
destroyed forever

If, through you, Sarastro is not rendered lifeless!
Hear! Gods of vengeance! Hear! a mother's oath!

This aria also portrays the upward ascent of flames of fire, her rising lines serving as a metaphor for her rising fury and hysteria:

Allegro assai

Der Hölle Ra - che kocht in mei - nem

Viol., Va. *p*

Tutti *f* *p*

Archi *f*

Its range reaching even higher than the previous aria, high F, the diametric opposite of Sarastro's low F:

29

mei - ne Toch - ter

Fl., Ob. I

Archi *fp* *fp* *fp*

CONCLUSION

It was established that the libretto of *Die Zauberflöte* was based on three immediate sources: the fairytales from *Dschinnistan*, a collection of tales based on the occult; Ignaz von Born's *Über die Mysterien der Aegyptier*, an article comparing the ancient Egyptian priesthood with eighteenth-century Freemasonry; and on *The Life of Sethos*, a fictional memoir by Jean Terrasson recounting the life of a young Prince, Sethos, in ancient Egypt.

The opera contains many of the elements present in The Mysteries of ancient Egypt: deities and guiding spirits, the snake, an institutionalized system of morality, priests and temples, the vow of silence, rituals of initiation by fire and water, the sacred marriage, Nature/magic, the flute/music, and sacrifices.

Through the three main sources of the libretto it was ascertained that the core message of the ancient Egyptian Mysteries, portrayed in its symbolic corpus, was a principle of morality containing a mechanism of rewards and punishments, a law of opposing forces. This law was termed the law of Harmony, Equilibrium, Truth, Balance, the cosmic order of the universe.

The moral law of opposing forces is a Dyad. It is a duality-filled system, which the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, and the Xenophanes credited as being the principal cause of the fall of mankind. In their opinion, when humans detached themselves from the Monad, an "unmixed" principle perceived to belong to the Creator God, they fell into a destructive contradictory duality. This law has a striking resemblance with the Dyad present in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden, as narrated in the Biblical texts. It was present in Egypt under the name of *Maat*, which was at the center of the Egyptian Mysteries. A concern with a contrary dualism is also evident in the works of several eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers such as Wordsworth, Milton, Kant, Keats, Blake, Schelling, Schiller, and Nietzsche. These authors explicitly cast their narratives of healing and reunification within

the themes of Fall and Redemption, including references to the Garden of Eden. It was also confirmed that this law was the Royal Decree of the Prince in the teachings of the Freemasons, as seen in the writings of Albert Pike.

According to Plutarch, the gods of ancient Egypt were Grand Daemons who, like human beings, contained various degrees of good and evil. The ancient gods rewarded or punished their followers, who offered sacrifices in order to appease and gain their favor.

Just as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was supposed to carry a principle of death, the whole culture of ancient Egypt was enveloped in a funerary cultic element. Death was perceived as the ultimate goal of life and as the true initiation. Isis represented Nature, and Osiris was Psychopomp, the ruler of the underworld. The cosmic balance of the universe was said to be dependent upon their marriage, which represented a union between the visible and the invisible worlds. Typho, also part of the Egyptian godhead, represented all that was evil, and his yearly ritual death was also perceived as resetting the cosmic balance of the universe.

Die Zauberflöte's characters which symbolize the polar opposites are Sarastro and the Queen of the Night. Their significance is reinterpreted through the Monad and Dyad model. They resemble Isis and Osiris, the gods in the opera who form a godhead made up of light and darkness, good and evil. Their actions reveal that they operate by both good and evil depending on circumstances. Thus they are not intrinsically either good or evil, but intrinsically "good and evil." They punish and reward their subjects in order to establish order. Sarastro is hailed as the wise sage that rewards and punishes "all within the same orbit." Tamino is accepted into the Order of the priests so that he may perpetuate the law that rewards virtue and punishes vice.

Tamino and Pamina represent the future generation of the system of contrary duality. Like Isis and Osiris, their marriage is a symbol of the union between Nature and the underworld. Before their union can take place, Tamino and Pamina must undergo purification trials of water and fire, which in ancient Egypt were symbols of the good and evil principles present in the Egyptian godhead. Passing through these trials was a symbolic way of permanently imprinting

the law of contrary forces in their minds and characters. After passing through purification, which was a symbolic death as well, Tamino and Pamina faced the gods, and were said to have become gods, a claim similar to that which the serpent offered to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The mythological lore asserts that the flute was invented by Osiris, who forced Egypt's surrounding nations into civilization, using music as a tool to charm them. Osiris' act of civilizing the peoples entailed teaching them the core beliefs of The Mysteries and, in particular, the law of opposing forces. The flute is then a symbol of his essence, which is a mixture of love and wrath, of beneficence and evil. As the flute is an instrument of power and control, it requires its subjects to follow it implicitly. This equates to the act of offering *Maat*, or the acquiescence and acceptance of the double principle. It is only through this spiritual offering, however, that the gods are able to live. Therefore, were human beings to cease offering *Maat*, the gods would lose their power.

From the evidence found in this research, the pure, unmixed Monad of the Olympian Gods is the only true opposite of the divisible, mixed, "two-faced" Dyad. In the Garden the Monad was called the Tree of Life, and the Dyad the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which brought death. When perceived in this context, the Monad would appear to be the true light, life, and the Dyad darkness, death. The Monad offers an alternative to the exacting moral law of contrary forces. Ironically, this option was expressed in a maxim by one of the most famously anti-God of modern philosophers:

"What is done out of love always takes place beyond good and evil."

Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche.

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VITA

Denice Raymundo Grant was born in São Paulo, Brazil, where she began her musical studies at the age of four. In 1973, her family moved to Portugal, and while there Denice had the opportunity to study at the Lisbon National Conservatory. Subsequently, her family moved to Canada in 1975, where she finished High School at Kingsway College. While attending High School she took theory and piano exams at the Toronto Royal Conservatory.

Mrs. Grant graduated with a Bachelor of Music in Voice and Piano performance from Walla Walla College in 1983, where she studied piano with Professor Leonard Richter and voice with Dr. Marianne Scriven. In 1985 she received a Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Northern Illinois University, where she studied with Professor Donald Walker.

After moving to Seattle in 1990, Denice was employed by the Pacific Northwest Ballet as company pianist. In 2000 she moved to Houston, where she worked for the Houston Ballet in the same capacity. Since returning from Houston to Seattle in 2002, she has started a piano and vocal teaching studio, is involved in chamber music, and has accompanied several professional choruses in the area, some of which include the Bellevue Chamber Chorus, the Northwest Girl Choir, the Choir of the Sound, and The Seattle Choral Company. She has also worked with the Seattle-Japan Suzuki Institute, the Seattle Opera, the Seattle Symphony Chorale, the Bellevue Symphony, and the Intiman Theatre. Denice has appeared in concert with the Seattle Philharmonic, the Skagit Symphony, The Port Angeles Symphony, and the Rainier Symphony Orchestra. She has been an organist at the Shoreline Presbyterian Church and presently is music director at the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church in WA, and Director of the Choral Department at Skagit Adventist Academy in Burlington, WA. Denice has two children, and lives with her husband in the Skagit Valley. In 2012 she earned a Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Washington, in Piano Performance, with Professor Craig Sheppard.