

The Original Fascination techniques

This paper provides a description of ancient fascination techniques.

I am dividing this paper into 6 sections.

1. Fascination psycho-physical practices in popular literature
2. Who are the Fascinators?
3. What is Fascination?
4. Preparation techniques and rituals in the fascinators' community
5. Influence, therapy, spirituality in fascinators' practices
6. Magnetism and fascination

Western Fascination Psycho Physical Practices in Popular Literature.

You may have noticed that I use the term "Western Fascination" in this paper. I do that for a very specific reason.

Western Fascination tradition refers to an original secret tradition diffused once in Europe and showing a great similarity in the practices between different cultural groups.

This paper will focus specifically on Western European practices; those of transforming one's body, taught control, harmonization and developing inner power and influence.

For the sake of clarity, the paper will focus on the popular promotion of fascination practices before it addresses the specific practices of the real tradition.

There were a number of groups that had access to some of the elements of the ancient fascination practice.

These practices were diffused within Europe until the 20th Century when modernity led to clashes between ancient popular practices based on self-development and modernity.

This clash led to a transformation of the system.

While some aspects of what has been called "animal magnetism" have had broader diffusion, the complete culture, practices of fascination and many aspects of the magnetism that were not justified by the scientific perspective of the last century have gradually disappeared and were almost completely lost and deleted from the records of human civilisation.

It was due to the effort of a few researchers that the culture and practices of fascination have been retained and can now receive broader cultural recognition. I will make a brief reference to some of these researchers before describing the distinctive work of the original tradition.

Franz Anton Mesmer: The most famous representative of this tradition is F A Mesmer. Today, his work is normally only discussed from a modern psychology point of view, leaving many aspects out.

We know that Mesmer had contact with popular tradition once it was diffused in the German area. We also know that he was a researcher and also got in contact with the more aristocratic traditions linked to the esoteric work.

Followers of F. A. Mesmer, notably Marquis de Puysegur, recreated the theoretical and cosmological framework of F.A. Mesmer. Specifically, they didn't continue their work using the power of the gaze, but instead worked in a more magnetic way.

Nevertheless we can suppose that, in the French area, there were people in contact with the real original tradition. **Luzy**, living in France, wrote "La Puissance du Regard". This book shows the existence of a school working on developing gaze power for influencing, also in France. Also, the emergence of **Donato** at the end of the 19th Century shows the existence and nestling in the niche zone of demonstrational technique of a gaze school using specific methods.

Importance of Mesmer. Many people have had an active involvement with Mesmer's work.

The impressive contribution that his work has made to the diffusion of magnetism cannot be overlooked.

We know that Mesmer also approached freemasonry tradition and entered into an Egyptian lodge.

F. A. Mesmer put emphasis on using symbols in order to guide the mind. His symbols are very original and have no connection with other traditions. They are also different from the standard freemason symbols.

His work has helped to ensure that magnetic culture is taken seriously and he has shown that the fascination cultural artefacts reward intensive study.

F.A. Bishoff and the Leipzig School: Very little is known about F.A. Bishoff. We only know he lived in Leipzig at the beginning of the century.

His work is comprised of a few popular books, and inside these books there are many hints going toward a tradition that seem very ancient.

F.A. Bishoff proposes an interest in cosmology, as well as the use of many symbols, to increase effectiveness.

"Altmann Verlag", an editor, published F.A. Bishoff's work. In the same period, another interesting editor, "Baumann Verlag", was active in the same town. Baumann Verlag was bound to Braun who, in the following years, founded the "Gralens Order" (Order of the Grail). Even if Braun would normally refer to himself as an American writer, there are some elements he had in common with Bishoff

The Leipzig School and the Northern Italian School: Before the 1910s, it is probable that there was an institute that was very effective in Leipzig. We have a testimonial about it from an Italian source that had probably vouchsafed some of those secrets that were held by some of its practitioners before the first mondial war. The war brought many problems and the original institute was dissolved. Some of the key elements that we have retrieved from this source are rare exercises for the gaze

as well as a self-hypnotism method combining various elements. Even if they are not in the same context of the original practices, they are very interesting

We have also scoured the world in search of other information and have found an important author, Shaftesbury, who is in America. He doesn't divulge his sources, but some elements he writes about are interesting.

We know for sure that migrants in America divulged many secrets that were closely guarded in Europe. His work has some interesting aspects and the knowledge of some of them are rare aspects.

It is certainly fair to say that Shaftesbury seems to be a very generous man who offers and shares his knowledge. His knowledge on the subject includes the exercises that he witnessed. The exercises are highly effective and can improve health.

There are two warnings that need to go with his writings. There is no clear knowledge about many of the practices that he describes. For example, an exercise that he proposes to improve eyesight is, in reality, a central stone in the fascination techniques. There are also other speculations that may have been introduced into the text and may not have come from his teachers.

However, as an underground classic, the text helps to understand how some elements of the ancients' school were known at the beginning of the 19th Century in America.

Another American author who wrote about mental fascination was William Atkinson. In any case, he only witnessed some demonstrations.

Moreover, whilst it is important to recognise the similarities between Shaftesbury work and Atkinson work, it is of equal importance to note that Shaftesbury and Atkinson were not familiar with the practices of the ancient fascinators.

These authors were certainly not initiated directly into these practices.

Atkinson clearly states he interviewed many fascinated persons but admitted that he was not admitted to the most closely guarded practices. These practices were secret and have only recently, with the help of the persons we met and our research, been released to the world.

Other interesting elements and sources: Even if not specifically related to fascination, we have found some elements of Mazdaznan to be of great interest. This combined various elements with teachings stemming from a mystical tradition of ancient Zoroastrianism and Persian Yoga.

We have a testimonial of the Roman poet Catulle. It says that Persians believed the fascination techniques were possessions of specific families.¹

Section 4: Who are the Fascinators?

¹ Nascatur magus ex Gelli matrisque nefando
Concubitu, et discat persicum haruspicium.
Nam magus ex matre et gnato nascatur oportet,
Si vera est Persarum impia religio:
Natus ut accepto veneretur carmine divos
Mentum in flammam pingue liquefaciens.

This leads us to our next section. Who are the fascinators?

The fascinators are people that used their gaze to affect other people's reality. They are also people able to affect their own reality with the gaze.

Even if very ancient, this art was always kept secret and transmitted under oath not to reveal it. As a specific art, it was transmitted in closed circles.

Before, in ancient times, it was the possession of certain clans. Plinius, in the 7th book of *Naturalis Hystoriae*, says that in Africa, Schythia and Illiria there were families that transmitted the ability to fascinate.

In the middle age this ability was attributed to people living in the northern countries. Olaus Magnus wrote: *"Sunt Biarmi, idolatrae et Amaxobii, Scitarum more, atque in fascinandis hominibus instructissimi, quippe qui aut oculorum, aut verborum alicuius alterius rei maleficio homines ita ligant, ut liberi non sint, nec compotes; saepeque ad extremam maciem deveniat et tabescendo deperant."*²

The testimonials demonstrate the history of people having this ability but it is clear that, even in ancient times, it was a very closed practice. Fascination was always very near to the practice of magic. Anyway, the persons practicing this technique were always a very small elite group as there was a need of a very specific training.

We met two people that were the last exponents of this old tradition: Virgilio and Erminio di Pisa.

Virgilio was born in 1929. He was born in Piedmont, on the northern side of Italy and very near to both France and Switzerland. It is the place where we can encounter influences from both Italian and French culture.

Many people of Piedmont travelled to France, and even Virgilio spent some years during his life there. Virgilio carries elements and techniques with him that we did not find in any written records, and that have a highly probability of being an extreme ancientdom. This includes a set of exercises for developing the person.

Many of the last true practitioners of this ancient wisdom lived in the countryside, which happened to be the place where some teaching could be unadulteratedly preserved until recently, and because of the importance of the natural element for practising in this culture.

Erminio di Pisa also lived in northern Italy, in Milan. There he learnt from Caravelli the technique. Having learnt the basics of fascination in Italy, Erminio di Pisa went to France in order to learn other techniques. He connected the fascination techniques with research on the stone power. Some of his methods were also very ancient as he strongly used fascination to create power and achieve therapeutical results.

Even if he wrote a book, he never fully disclosed all techniques that are of a practical nature.

² Olaus Magnus Gotho - *Historia de le genti et de la Natura delle cose Settentrionali* - Translated in lingua Toscana MDLXV. - Cap. 7.

What is Fascination?

Fascination is the capability to use gaze and to master his world as well other people's world.

We can identify some key elements that link this culture to other elements we find in history.

I will give an overview of the origins of fascination starting by the Greek myth of Medusa and by outlining after the importance of the mastery of attention for the fascinators. Finally I will offer a brief description of the unique cosmological experience at the basis of it.

Origins of Fascination

The Greek Myth of Medusa

One of the earliest recorded examples of the culture of fascination was in Ancient Greece. Some elements of the Greek myth clearly show that we face a tradition of many thousands of years, and are also very precise about some aspects of the technique. The Medusa, one of the Gorgons, is at the centre of the Aegis of Zeus.

If we look at the Greek myth we find a detailed description of many elements of the history of fascination and they probe the antiquity of the tradition we met: "About her shoulders she flung the tasselled aegis, fraught with terror...and therein is the head of the dread monster, the Gorgon, dread and awful, a portent of Zeus that beareth the aegis."(5.735ff). It's earthly counterpart is a device on the shield of Agamemnon: "...And therein was set as a crown the Gorgon, grim of aspect, glaring terribly, and about her were Terror and Rout."(11.35ff).

The idea of "terror" that is linked with the use of gaze is very ancient. As the gaze is strictly related to attention, the power of affecting one's reality with the gaze is increased by heightening the attention.

One of the methods used to create more attention is awe. In a late version of the Medusa myth, related by the Roman poet Ovid (Metamorphoses 4.770), Medusa was originally a beautiful nymph, "the jealous aspiration of many suitors," but when she was raped by the "Lord of the Sea", Poseidon, in Athena's temple, the goddess transformed her beautiful hair to serpents and she made her face so terrible to behold that the mere sight of it would turn a man to stone. In this myth we see both aspect of fascination. The nymph fascinates before using charm as well as awe. A modern interpretation could be that strong emotions help also to create gamma waves in the brain, one of the aspects that seem to facilitate paranormal experiences, which is very similar to the experience of fascination.

Continuing the Greek myth, whilst Medusa was pregnant by Poseidon she was beheaded in her sleep by the hero Perseus, who was sent to fetch her head by King Polydectes of Seriphus. The hero slayed Medusa by looking at her reflection in the mirror instead of directly at her to prevent being turned into stone. When the hero severed Medusa's head, from her neck two offspring sprang forth: the winged horse Pegasus and the giant Chrysaor.

This again connects with the actual fascination technique in that the practitioner makes the muscle of his head stiff. The reason for it probably enhancing the intense rhythm accompanying the realization of the fascination.

Importance of the Mastery of Attention

The basic training of fascination involves beginning to learn to fix attention, and to be a master at it. As ourselves create reality, training the attention is learning to be master of what we create. Every fascinator put absolute importance in the mastery of the gaze.

Cosmology: the technique involves a complete cosmology as there are two basic forces, symbolized by the two eyes and the two halves of the body. At this point we find a striking convergence with the Egyptian tradition. The right eye is male and positive, emitting, while the left eye is feminine and negative, absorbing.

These two forces are symbolized by the sun and the earth (Bishoff) or by the sun and the moon (F.A. Mesmer, Bishoff). A basic goal is to merge them both in the practitioner to develop power. There is also the nature. Man finds his dimension in harmonizing with the nature. And finally there is the spirit. Spirit is before everything and has no limits. Spirit is before thoughts, emotions and physical reality as well as time. Spirit is of the same nature as God. Spirit is the subtlest of elements we can find and, as we practice the technique, we go to a high level of subtlety

Other Elements

Physiology: The fascinator strives to achieve a specific change in his physiology in order to be a different person. The most important element of this transformation is carried out through developing the power of the gaze. Also two other elements are important: posture and breathing.

Numerology: As everything is based on harmony, numbers are very important as they permit an individual to express the true reality of things. Virgilio held the use of numbers as very important, thus meeting strictly with an unknown French individual very near to F.A.Mesmer. He also expressed the importance of these elements in his work.

The Seven Colours: The colours are also very important. These colours are both a method of influencing as well a specificity of man. Man is like a photo machine and each of the seven colours affects his behaviour

The Secret Words of Power: Finally, in fascination we find the use of specific words for creating action and projecting mental states.

Magnetism Free Masonry and Fascination

I would like to digress for a moment and briefly discuss the importance of this history in gaining an understanding of the rituals and practices of our society. It is my belief, though this is hard to prove, that many fascinator practices have had a direct influence on our society.

It is highly probably that some fascinator techniques have influenced Cagliostro. That surfaced a lot in the different traditions for sure, and has let in a trace of what is called Egyptian Freemasonry.

The importance of the seven angels, as well as the use of the person that looked in the water to see them, could be directly referred to the use of seven colours. Many other elements also lead us to think that Cagliostro knew some elements of fascination. Mesmer and many other practitioners of this discipline (including Erminio di Pisa) felt a strong interest toward freemasonry, as can be seen by our society being based on many of the same principles that are also at the basis of the tradition of fascinators as symbols, the importance of free thought etc...

Besides the elements derived from the fascination school we can find in Egyptian freemasonry, in the freemasonry tradition there are also many elements that go along a parallel path and can be interpreted as linked to old magnetic practices: the chain, the two columns, and many other elements. As this paper will deal specifically with fascination, we will expand them in a further paper.

Virgilio's Secrets

Virgilio (one of our teachers) could be seen as the last remaining custodian of some of the trade secrets of this tradition. Traditionally, teaching this kind of technique is very slow, and it took us 15 years to get into the system. He had a very personal and direct experience of the essence of fascination and of the original cosmology. He also expressed his ideas through pictorial works. Some of these works describe his personal interpretation and experience of life and nature very clearly.

The two polarities (male and female) are very present in a lot of his abstract works. From the other side, he also completed some realistic paintings. In this painting, the reality is represented in a way in which trees have ears and eyes to symbolize the fact that they are living and listening. Eyes are present many times. The fact is that the fascinator lives in a pictorial reality, thus are very similar to the Egyptians. The description of the practices will help to clarify the meaning of the creed.

Animals and Nature

Man is very similar to animals. F.A. Mesmer spoke of animal magnetism and was referring to this inner reality. Animals are also the basis for man to become king of nature because he can guide animals with the power of his gaze. Overcoming animals with the power of gaze is part of a development toward power.

In the development of fascination, Virgilio devised some exercises to fascinate animals. Also, Luzy cites some of these experiments that are functional to the development of the mastery. The Greek Pitagora also is said to have this power as stated by Caelius Rodiginus³

Society

³ Caelius Rodiginus - Lib. XIX, cap. VII, p. 735. He says that pytagora fascinated many animals. This element could bring the use of numerology by fascinators to very ancient times.

Choosing to follow what society or church teaches us is only a matter of convenience. The fascinator should think for himself and not let anyone influence him.

From Fascination to the Aristocratic Tradition of Presence

Until this point we have presented the popular tradition of fascination. This tradition merged with the aristocratic tradition of presence and went beyond just achieving power. We call it aristocratic as this tradition was always bound with a "heroic quest". Man found his sense in practising and verticalising himself. In taking this further path can develop himself going "past the world of mirrors".

Will and Definition of Conviction

As man must become master of himself, he must become master of his thoughts. Between the most important thoughts are the convictions. The words of power and other tools are the methods he uses in becoming master of his convictions.

As spirit becomes master of thoughts, man must also begin to have a different rapport with reality. He must begin to feel nature and its laws.

Life Force

The practitioner develops "life force" that he is subsequently able to direct at will. Life force and will are strictly connected. Life force must be understood as vital fluid, animal magnetism. It is something to understand in its real sense. Today man is very detached from nature and animalism. In the past, this was different. Animal magnetism is something that even animals possess in various degrees, and is diffused in the nature.

We connect to the others not only through words, but also at a more subtle level, referred to as "energetic." When we are in harmony with nature and with life we are at this energetic level. We impact on this level through our will power, our emotions, etc...

Therefore, the operator is very important in this process, as he is a source of change. Even if it's called a "fluid", this is not a fluid in the real sense of term. No fascinator thinks of it as something you could really perceive. The word "fluid" helps us understand and encourages the mind to work with it: in other words if you open the mind to the possibility of a vital fluid, and of a connection between man and nature, you can experience it and be able to act with it on other people.

The idea of energy is also connected to the idea of "will power." Will power acts not only through non-verbal channels, but also through energetic channels.

Preparation Practices

Virgilio described a number of purification and preparation practices that support and enable increased health, well being and more direct communication with the power within enabling the practitioner to achieve far more.

The practices fall into 6 main groups

- Unifying the mind
- Mastery of thought
- Mastery of the gaze
- Breathing
- Physical guidelines, sunlight, fresh air
- Emotional power

Unifying the Mind

First step is being able to harmonize the two halves of the brain. Man must be able to exchange feelings between left to right. If I have cold at the right hand and warm at the left hand, I must have the ability to exchange them. Many people will fail at this point, as they will require too much concentration.

Mastery of Thought

The second step is to be able to master inner reality through visualization exercises. The reality inside the brain should have the same tangibility of the reality outside. The practitioner begins to observe objects clear. He must see things in his mind as they are really. This is the key to create new realities

Mastery of the Gaze

Mastery of the gaze is fundamental. The practitioner must be able to observe an object without blinking. There are two basic observations: the black point and the reflex. Also, there are two basic attitudes: calm and sending arrows. This second attitude develops will power.

Breathing

Breathing practices are extremely important. As we breathe, we charge our brain. If we think of it, we will supercharge it. There are specific breathing practices that support power, meditation and expression.

The efficiency of a persons breathing is also linked to the elimination of toxins.

Human beings breathe under two regimes, one is unconscious and one is conscious. The more we are conscious of breathing the stronger we are. The oxygen must be directed to the brain, in order to activate it.

There are also some other important exercises: the alternate breathing that creates energy and the breathing with just one side of the nose. In this case the right breathing is used to enhance good thought and the left breathing to put out bad thoughts.

Physical Guidelines, Sunlight and Fresh Air

Fresh air is very important, as well as the use of the sun. The sun can charge the bottom part of the eye and give energy. Physically, there are also specific exercises to develop energy in the body (what the Indians call kundalini). The most simple are based on leg movements. Others help the spine to be straight. These exercises develop the physical part of the WILL. Finally, specific exercises of muscular tension are very important. These exercises charge the body with ENERGY.

Emotional Mastery

The practitioner must become also master of his emotions. Not only in living them, but also in expressing them. Expressing them must be a game.

Perceptive and Intuitional Practice in Fascination

There are a lot of perceptive practices accompanying the preceding exercises. The goal of these practices is to further harmonize the practitioner with nature. They involve the knowledge of different sciences, such as astrology, etc... If possible, we will deal more on them in a next paper.

Developing intuition is fundamental for the fascinators. He must become able to ascend to inner creativity and expression inside himself. Also, artistic work is useful, as the practitioner develops a part of the mind he rarely uses. It is important to exercise more, even exercises that are considered difficult.

Perception of the Whole

Another important and useful exercise is the perception of the whole. Seeing, for example, two objects together without distinction etc...

Praying

There are two ways of praying: the first one is connecting himself with the whole, with an egregore created by all prayers. It is a way of harmonizing. The second one is becoming aware of the God connection, and of the power inside.

Second Level

These further elements, some of which I have already mentioned, are related to the use of colours, numbers and other elements to harmonize further the practitioner and give him more power. They are given normally under oath, which binds people not to reveal them. Of massive importance are the "words of power". These are words without conscious meaning but that help to create many specific psychophysical reactions.

Gaze, Inner Trance and Outer Trance

Most of the time, people live in an inner trance. Living in an inner trance means we don't pay attention to the exterior, but instead we react automatically to the events of life. These aspects have been recently observed by therapist (Erickson, Rossi) and are important elements of many traditions.

Gurdjeff, for example, spoke of the "automatic man" - the man that sleeps and go through life sleeping. This sleeping could be deemed an "inner trance state" within modern terminology. We react on the basis of learned responses.

Besides the reaction based on learned response, there are also many moments in which we don't pay attention to the exterior as we are caught in an internal trance state. In these moments we are imagining and reliving old patterns and moments.

One of the key aspects of entering into an inner trance is the eye focalisation. We defocalize from the reality. The fascinator instead learns to focalise his thoughts and to create his inner world, at least in some moments, as he wants. He learns concentration, mastery of thought, and mastery of visualization and imagination. Learning to create his own reality, he understands that reality is appearance, and thus we can see a link between these techniques and the concept of "presence", and we can also understand some applications for therapy and personal relationships.

Techniques For Therapy and Emotional Mastery

There is a series of techniques based on the gaze useful for therapy. Their efficacy is based on looking at the client as he is in the problem state. Each problem state could be perceived as a personal trance, and as we look at him we really "step in" his trance state. In this way, we create an interpersonal trance. At this point, we become part of the reality of the client and we can be a resource for him.

To practice this technique, the operator must have undergone a thorough and thoughtful training program in order to overcome the defence mechanism that people uses to soften interpersonal contact. As people think of a problem, they would normally focalise their gaze before or after the person with whom they speak. They therefore "don't look straight in the eyes".

Erminio Di Pisa's method was the following: he used gaze in order to enter into the reality of the client, and used his personal power to achieve change. In both instances he used symbols.

Another method was based on "resetting the mind", creating a new reality where the problem didn't exist. To achieve it, he approached the person, fully used the power of the gaze and noticed that, after projecting the idea, the problem was gone.

Mesmer method was based on thinking of the problem as something that was blocked. In this point of view he joins some modern theories that speak of "stuck emotions". Every negative emotion is a "stuck emotion", an emotion that needs to find its way. In intensifying the negative feeling, we "change level" and go "past the problem".

Another method is combining life force and magnetism. This is very useful with people that don't feel or perceive deep emotions. In this case, a great attention is achieved that dissociates the client. Soon after the client is brought in a deep association with himself and in a deep trance.

Social contexts

As gaze develops, the person practising these techniques is not bound by the normal conventions. He understands that the world is simply appearance. Both Di Pisa and Virgilio, as well as Mesmer and every person practising this technique, achieve a different way of looking at society. Society is a matter of convenience. As the fascinator becomes master of the gaze, he understands that things are only for the sake of appearance.

The exercises also develop strong will and determination, in particular the exercises for the gaze and the breathing. The practitioner learns to act in a spontaneous, determined and strong way.

Spirituality and Aristocratic Use of the Fascination: The Way of the Presence

We have no direct personal testimonials from Virgilio and Erminio, but some elements seem to point toward this direction. A German tradition teaches the practitioner to see himself "before his thoughts".

In any case, the existence of a spiritual practice seems to be shown by many architectural elements and demonstrates a relationship between gaze and spiritual development. The ancient temples used mirrors and on Egyptians walls we often find representations of the eye.

Beyond the simple "spiritual" use, there is the "aristocratic" use. We call this "aristocratic" as the man practising it will put himself on a different level. The level is that of "awareness"

A way for developing more self-awareness is the use of a mirror. The practitioner looks at his reflection in the mirror. This exercise brings more awareness. It is important to do it with cognition, as looking at his reflection without the necessary preparation could lead to negative states and hallucinations.

The basic exercise of the first cycle consists of looking at an object with fixed gaze and could be used for "quieting the mind".

Magnetism and Fascination

Until now, we have spoken of the school of fascination. Very similar to it, but slightly different, is the school of magnetism. F.A. Mesmer was probably initiated in both. The two schools, even if very similar in some aspects, are different in others.

Magnetism is strictly bound to the laying of the hand but fascination with the use of the eye. The latter was always kept more secret. It was pure chance that we could meet one of the last representatives and create this paper.

In the ancient Egypt it seems that the two specialties were practised together in the temples. In Middle Ages we see reports of people practicing only fascination as well of people practising only magnetism.

Magnetism is bound to different types of trances, more relaxed in which people are charged with life force while in a deep state of quietness.

Appendix: Symbols of different cultures that could be related to concepts of the fascination school.

Table I

Egypt, Rome and Greece

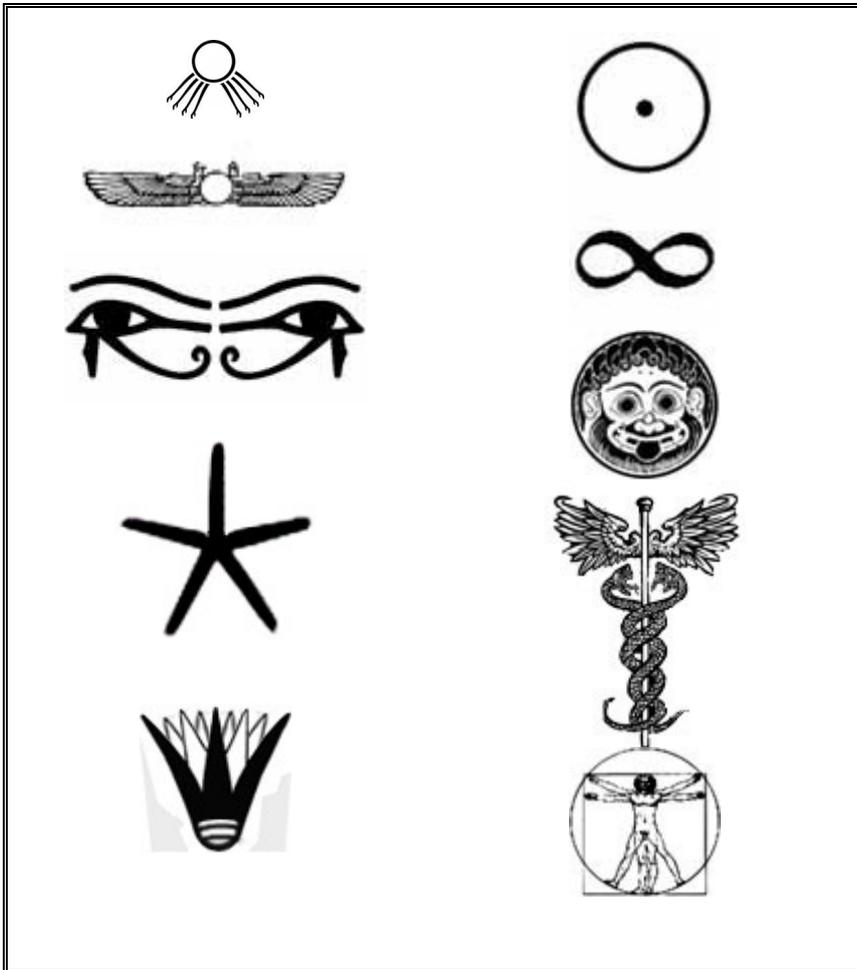


Table II

Keltic and Indian symbols

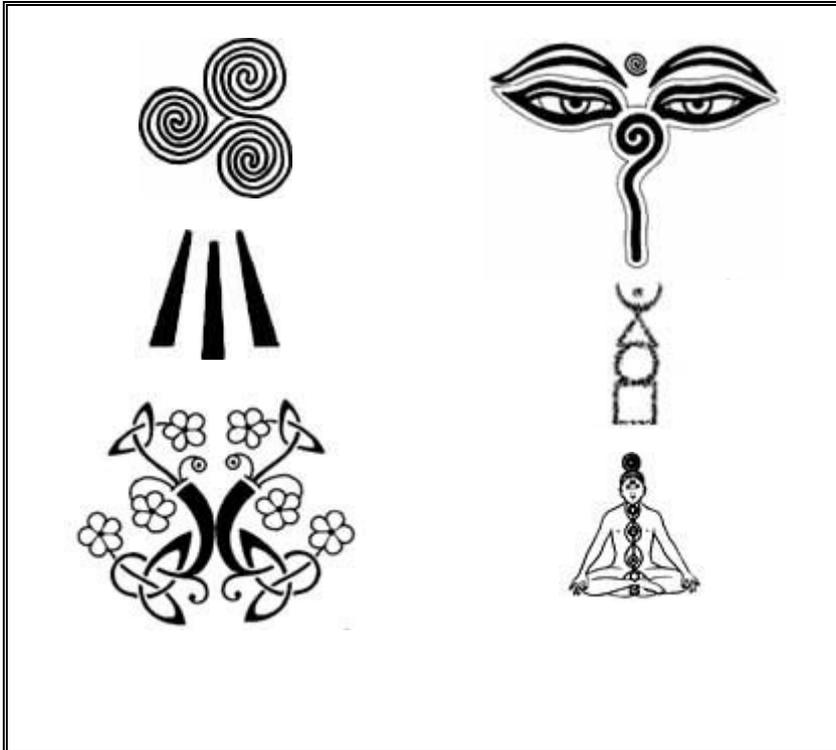


Table III

Mesmer's symbols

