

Which deity governs hypnosis?

Or, what is the ruling planet for the practice of hypnosis?

I would begin by posing some hypothetical questions: can we “steal” someone’s illness, or problems? Are we ever guilty of “tricking” someone into feeling better? Is this another version of “crazy wisdom”, or “Coyote hypnosis”?

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In the way that they sometimes do, books that have lived for years, perhaps decades on my shelves, gathering dust and an occasional glance at their spine, will find the right moment to call my attention. In such a way, Norman O. Brown’s *Hermes The Thief - The Evolution of a Myth* suddenly began to “glow” from the bookshelf, and I took it in hand and began to leaf through it. A Vintage Book paperback published in 1969, the copyright is 1947 - perhaps a synchronicity, as that was the year of my birth. Besides which, Mercury rules Virgo, my astrological “sun sign”.

Hermes, for those who do not know, is an Olympian god in Greek religion and mythology. He was the son of Zeus and Maia, the Pleiad. The Romans placed him as Mercury in their pantheon - he’s that guy on the old dime, with wings on his heels and his helmet. Mercury the planet, being closest to the sun, revolves in the fastest orbit of all the planets; Mercury the deity, was among other things, the messenger of the gods - the only one who could traverse between heaven and hell.

So, in brief, according to Wikipedia, the Homeric Hymn to Hermes claims that “After giving birth to the baby, Maia wrapped him in blankets and went to sleep. The rapidly maturing infant Hermes crawled away to [Thessaly](#), where by night-fall of his first day he stole some of his half-brother [Apollo](#)'s cattle and invented the [lyre](#) from a tortoise shell. Maia refused to believe Apollo when he claimed Hermes was the thief and Zeus then sided with Apollo. Finally, Apollo exchanged the cattle for the lyre, which became one of his identifying attributes.”

As was revealed by the brilliant linguist portrayed by Amy Adams in the recent movie, “Arrival”, the Sanskrit word for “war” means literally, “the desire for more cows”. Lo and behold, here it is, cited on page 5 of Norman Brown’s “*Hermes The Thief*”. Furthermore, Brown goes on to point out that “Coexistent with this institution of warlike plundering, or robbery, and terminologically distinguished

from it in the Indo-European languages, was another type of appropriation, called theft. Theft is appropriation by stealth, robbery is open and forcible appropriation.”

Furthermore, Brown goes on to say, “A special kind of stealthy or guileful action is attributed to Hermes in Homer’s description of the gift he bestowed on Autolykus. That gift was not merely ‘stealthiness’; it was ‘stealthiness and skill at the oath.’ ‘Skill at the oath’ means guile or cunning in the use of the oath, and derives from the primitive idea that an oath was binding only in its literal sense; a cunning person might legitimately manipulate it in order to deceive...” A bit later he said, “In Homeric Greek the root ‘theft’ had two well-established meanings: ‘to remove secretly’ and, more frequently, ‘to deceive’.”

THE BEGINNINGS OF COYOTE HYPNOSIS

It was raining very hard on one side of the field and the sun was shining brightly on the other. Coyote and Hermes were sitting on a rock right smack dab in the middle, having tea and chatting about why the devil was beating his grandmother.

It was a rare moment; as fast as he was, Coyote usually couldn’t catch up with Hermes when he was racing back and forth between heaven and hell. Coyote figured it wasn’t really fair, since Hermes had wings on his feet and head, but every now and then he could convince him to sit and take a breather. Coyote liked to talk to Hermes - Hermes knew about interesting stuff, like magic, and “secret action”.

“If I’m going to beat my grandmother,” said Coyote, “I’d rather beat her at some kinda game or bet, so’s I’d win something...”

“Well,” said Hermes, “there’s an easier way to get what you want”. Coyote’s eyes got big and round. “What’s that, Mr. Trickster”?

“That’s funny,” said Hermes; “you callin’ me a trickster... That’s like me callin’ you a thief!

“I am a thief. And a good one!” said Coyote. “Did I ever tell you about the time I stole all the nice smells from the daisies and the daffodils? That’s why even though they look so pretty, they don’t got no smell. I got all the nice smell - right?”

“Uhhh, is that what you call it, Coyote?” Hermes answered, a bit cynically. “I thought someone farted. Anyways, all’s ya gotta do is hypnotize someone. Then they’ll do whatever you want”.

“Really?” said Coyote. His eyes were as big as saucers by now. “Oh, you almost got me. Now I’m remembering you invented lying. You’re a liar! I don’t believe you!”

“Coyote, you idiot, I invented the lyre. Get your homonyms straightened out!”

“Oh, sorry,” said Coyote. Though he didn’t really mean it. “Okay, so how do you do that? I mean, like hypnotize someone to do whatever you want? Sounds like you’re manipulating the oats... That’s how ya stole those cows, right?” Even though he didn’t know what things meant, sometimes Coyote liked to show off by using them in sentences anyway.

“It’s easy”, replied Hermes. “See, it’s all pretend, anyways, so I just use my rod...” “—Your rod!” yelped Coyote, and then giggled. “I’m all for it if I get to use my rod”.

“Not that rod, you fool”, smirked Hermes, holding aloft his caduceus. “Hmm, how’d ya get those snakes to swirl around that staff?” Coyote wondered aloud.

“It’s an old kundalini trick,” said Hermes. “But that’s another story. Here’s what I was trying to say before I was so rudely interrupted: Not only do I have shoes to hide my footprints that are unspeakable, unthinkable, and marvelous, but when I steal chickens from the henhouse, I hypnotize the dogs... I put them to sleep using my rod - which also charms men’s eyes to sleep...”

“Once they’re asleep, you can tell ‘em anything, and they got to do it.”

“Wow, I’ve got to try that,” squealed Coyote! “Let’s see, what can I trick someone out of or into, using hypnosis?” Coyote thanked Hermes and ran off to his grandmother’s house, figuring he’d find or make a rod along the way. Now Coyote’s grandma was Woodchuck, and she wasn’t born yesterday. So she suspected that anything Coyote said or did, there was something he was trying to control or manipulate for his own advantage.

On his way through the woods, Coyote found a Willow branch that had fallen and he picked it up and began to trim it with his teeth and claws until it was nice and

smooth. "Here's ma rod.... uh, I mean my magic wand," he thought to himself, whistling through his teeth and he scampered on. "Every good hypnotist needs a magic wand!"

The willow branch had been lying in a pile of poison ivy, which Coyote, in his rush, hadn't noticed. Pretty soon his lips and paws started itching something crazy. But he was determined to find out if this hypnosis stuff worked like Hermes said.

When he reached Grandmother Woodchuck's dwelling, he strode in and sat down on Grandmother's favorite rocking chair, right next to the fireplace. That's where Grandmother liked to sit to 'warm her bones'.

"What you up to, Coyote?" asked Grandmother. "What's up with that stick? And why are your lips all swollen like that?"

"I figured out a way to talk better if my lips are swollen," said Coyote, improvising furiously. "And this 'stick' is a special item - ya see I got a new trick. But first I got to ask you a question: Grandmother, what's your most favorite possession?"

Grandmother furrowed her brow and thought for a second. "I guess I would have to say my rheumatoid arthritis," she said. "I had to live a long and busy life to get it. It's a special reminder of my mortality, and it is very precious to me, because it keeps me moving. It's not really a 'thing' so much as a feeling."

Coyote didn't know what rheumatoid arthritis was, but if it was that special to Grandmother, he was determined to trick her out of it... using hypnosis. He said, "Well, what if I could make you have more of it?" Grandmother smiled. "Oh sure, grandson. And how would you do that?"

"I'm going to wave my stick around in front of your face and when I do, you'll have to close your eyes. Then I'll explain the rest," said Coyote. It was getting harder and harder to understand him, the more swollen his lips got. Also, he kept switching hands to hold his rod, so he could scratch the furious itching at the tips of his paws where the poison ivy was blistering.

Even though he was a pretentious and bombastic fool, Coyote had some ju ju. So when Grandmother Woodchuck closed her eyes, she actually went into some kind of dream. Coyote thought and thought. Now what did Hermes say to do

next? He couldn't remember, so since he didn't know what else to do, he sang a little song...

Grandmother heard, as if from a distance, Coyote mumbling:

"Rheumatoid arthritis,
the bones that's inside us,
that feeling divine -
what's yours is now mine..."

You cannot feel it,
I will instead -
It's out of your body
And out of your head

Forever more that's
how it will be
You'll never again
feel rheumatoidee..."

She opened her eyes and jumped up and down. "Well, my stars, grandson - thank you! I haven't felt this spry in years! Whatever you did, it worked."

Coyote nodded. His poison ivy was a distant second to the horrible ache that he felt in every bone in his body. She-it! How did that happen? And what could he do to make these aches and pains go away?

He smiled a crooked smile at Grandmother and hobbled out the door. "Gotta find that trickster Hermes and ask him what went wrong," he thought. By the time he got to the boulder in the middle of the field where he sometimes had tea with Hermes he was crawling. Hermes was there, grazing some cows he had just stolen.

"What happened, Coyote?"

"Ouch, ouch, ouch! I did the hypnosis, like you said, but it backfired. My grandma feels great, but I'm fucked up. What can I do?"

"Let's build and have a good sweat bath - maybe that will help," answered Hermes. So they built one and sweated and Coyote's poison ivy and rheumatoid arthritis flew up into the sky where they lived happily ever after. Hermes said,

“Brother Coyote - I suggest next time, you try to do less. Much less. In fact - the best hypnosis is when you don't do nothin' at all! Look, you're the laziest creature in the world. Relax. Let the people figure it out. Now that's some Coyote Hypnosis!” ++

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