

Elemental Chaos
by Jaq D. Hawkins

The connections between Chaos Magic and chaos science have become common knowledge to magicians of all descriptions in recent years. The marriage of magic and science has added a new dimension to our general understanding of how things work under the laws of nature and the place that magic holds within the natural world.

Bringing a knowledge of complex scientific systems into the world of occult knowledge has brought a spectrum of reactions from other occultists. To some extent, Chaos Magicians have gained a reputation for being intellectual, often better educated than the average person, potentially eccentric, and in many cases arrogant or even just strange.

The fact is that an interesting variety of personalities are naturally drawn to this revolutionary area of magical study, ranging from very serious seeming magicians who would rather not be classified with new-agers who believe in crystals and fairies, to complete loonies who invoke Eris and glory in the weird (or was that wyrd...)

The common ground that this variety of magicians share is knowledge of a set of magical principles which include the understanding of laws of apparent randomness (or chaos) in nature, and the art of free belief. With these concepts in mind, perhaps it is not so far fetched that a Chaos Magician might indulge in serious study of the electromagnetic properties of crystals, or even suspend belief for a moment to genuinely examine the possibility and nature of elemental spirits, or fairies.

Whether one believes in nature spirits as actual entities or just as archetypes to explain otherwise inexplicable natural forces, the fact is that these forces do exist and operate within nature, and it is only through chaos science that we can hope to understand some of the seemingly random and chaotic behaviour of these energies. In many ways, it is easier to refer to them as entities whether or not we hold a literal belief in them as such, as we have yet to find a more logical definition of what these forces actually are.

In my “Spirits of the Elements” series (Capall Bann Publishing, Berkshire, England). I do exactly that. Referring to natural forces in terms of spiritual beings who inhabit the objects and elements of nature creates an easy reference system which also helps to explain the nature of thought-form elementals and other magical ‘beings’, as their behaviour is much the same. The laws of chaos science apply equally to the workings of magic as they do to the phenomena in nature.

From this standpoint, belief in elemental spirits becomes almost compulsory for the serious Chaos Magician. After all, if we cannot rise above the twee associations connected with Victorian flower fairies and give credence to the legendary bogies and brownies of history, how can we have any hope of learning to suspend belief in any of our magical workings which often require far more difficult and lesser known belief structures?

When you think about it, sending an Air spirit to deliver a message makes at least as much sense as simply 'willing' someone to hear your message. Asking an Earth spirit to contribute some of the Earth's electromagnetic energy to a spell is as logical as the expectation that you can simply absorb this energy yourself. Employing a Fire spirit to influence someone's motivation requires much less personal energy than directly 'willing' them to do something. Whether there is actually a separate entity involved in these operations, or you are separating a part of your own magical spirit to accomplish your goal, the results of sending this separate entity to do your bidding are often much more effective than the more direct approach.

That is the key to all Chaos Magic: RESULTS. What you choose to believe is actually causing these results is immaterial; the only thing that really matters is that you do achieve better results, and the fact that belief in help from spiritual beings of one sort or another brings results is inherent in most magical and shamanic systems, as well as the world's religions.

If we can find it easy to accept the belief in animal spirits in aboriginal cultures, it should be no great leap to also believe in spirits of plants, stones or anything else in nature. In fact, spirits of places feature largely in the same belief systems which accept animal spirits. From there, it is only a small additional step to the concept of spirits of winds, flames or any number of other examples of the alchemical elements.

The "Butterfly effect" in chaos science explains the concept of "sensitive dependence on initial conditions". What this boils down to is the idea that anything which happens in the natural world (including unnatural things done to the natural world) creates a change, however minute, which will cause a domino effect of slight changes which will escalate into a result far removed from what might have happened if the small act had not occurred. The example refers to a butterfly flapping its wings in Hong Kong, which creates a series of effects on wind currents which escalate to eventually result in a storm in New York.

This example may seem extreme, but it makes a nice illustration of a very real pattern in nature. If one wishes to perform a magical act, there are many ways that one may go about it depending on the choices of the magician and the results desired. A successful magical act will create a small change in something which we cannot weigh and measure according to available scientific methods, which in turn can make it very difficult to control the eventual results once the spell is released as any number of unanticipated factors can cause small changes in the energy we have set loose, leading to results which may or may not resemble what we originally had in mind.

This is where working with elemental spirit energies becomes a very attractive prospect, although not necessarily a 'safe' one. Traditionally, elemental spirits are independent creatures which can be tricky, playful and even malicious. This should be born in mind when working with them. On the other hand, because they are creatures of nature, they are subject to the laws of nature which are explained through chaos science.

What this means to us as magicians is that we can be assured that they will work within parameters which are dictated by natural law. Caution and forethought are still well advised, but the possible things that may go wrong are easier to anticipate and hopefully to redirect. Besides, making sure that you are on friendly terms with the spirit in question can actually create a magical current which is self-correcting and will redirect itself to your intended goal if there is interference of any kind, just as nature will correct itself if left to do so.

Most of us are aware that working with nature is far easier than working against it. The 'probability factor' of any magical act is greatly increased by the existence of a natural avenue which the magic may follow. Working with elemental spirits is actually working within nature, and therefore increases the probability factor by a significant degree.

So to those who would ask me, do I believe in fairies, I say "Too bloody right I do". After all, I am a Chaos Magician, and elemental spirits are the most chaotic creatures in the natural world. "IO PAN!"