

Nature Spirits



We live in a time when life on Earth seems to have been explored to the fullest degree. Vast amounts of information can be found on most questions that spring to mind. We explore the solar system, discovering more and more about our neighbouring planets, study comets and gaze into the depths of the universe.

In spite of all the scientific explanations, the mystery of life remains. The ancient texts and symbols refer to more forms of life than our modern science envisages. The esoteric tradition describes the visible world as a kind of outer plane of life perceptible to our physical senses and teaches that the whole universe is a living being that exists on many planes.

The old legends and myths are full of stories about the nature spirits or, as the esoteric tradition would call them, forms of life within the elements of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. We have all heard about them in the folklore of different nations – gnomes, fairies, sirens, nymphs, elves, salamanders... They are often depicted in Renaissance art and described in the literature of the Renaissance and the Romantic era. Paracelsus wrote a detailed treatise on the nature spirits in the 16th century. Generally they are understood as embodiments of the forces of nature (Paracelsus calls them 'Elementals') and are categorized into different types:

Earth Elementals: they include gnomes and fairies, amongst others. They are said to love moonlight and know the secrets of the earth. The stories tell that before work had become automatized, when people put real interest into their work, earth spirits were invisible companions and helpers in the workshops.

Water Elementals: sirens, nereids, undines, nymphs, tritons. They are said to inhabit sea-breezes, sea-foam, rivers, underwater grottoes, springs and fountains. There are plenty of stories about their enchanting powers. Tritons are said to have taught ancient travellers about the hidden treasures and lost knowledge of sunken lands.

Air Elementals: sylphs, elves. They are said to live in the air and to be in constant motion. Cloud formations are their work. Legends say that in every flower lives a little elf that produces its perfume.

Fire Elementals: salamanders. They are said to be seen in hearth-fires and have the



appearance of black serpents, moving and twisting. Salamanders are reputed to be very powerful.

The nature spirits are said to take care of every form of nature from the smallest to the largest – planets and stars. In times when there was a greater connection with the intangible world, people could learn many things from them.

Whether we believe it or not, let's not forget that the Earth is alive and, whether out of duty or because of a need to live together in harmony with our fellow creatures, we should take better care of it. And maybe if we become true lovers and students of nature, she might share with us her secrets and we would understand more about the beings that live in her world.