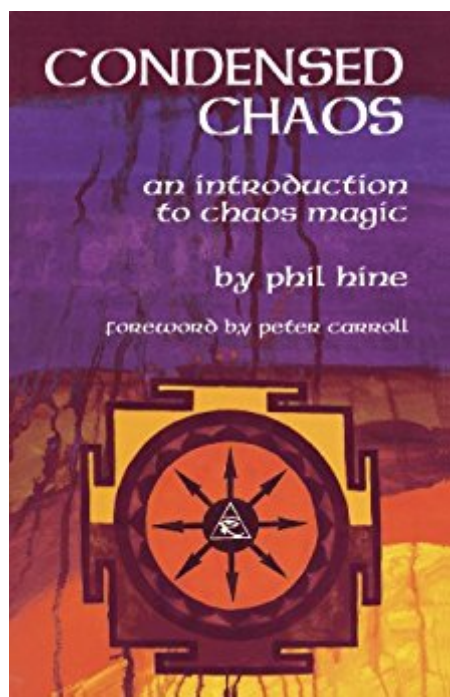


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Condensed Chaos: An Introduction To Chaos Magic



Synopsis

Condensed Chaos provides a practical introduction to Chaos Magic, one of the fastest growing areas of Western Occultism. Through it you can change your circumstances, live according to a developing sense of personal responsibility, effect change around you, and stop living as a helpless cog in some clockwork universe. All acts of personal/collective liberation are magical acts. Magic leads us into exhilaration and ecstasy; into insight and understanding; into changing ourselves and the world in which we participate. Through magic we may come to explore the possibilities of freedom.

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Customer Reviews

You may have noted that all the other reviews of "Condensed Chaos" (at least as of this date) are by practitioners of magick, so their concern is whether the this book helps them advance the state of their art. If you are a non-practitioner, as I am, you might wonder what this book is about and whether these folks are really serious about this magick stuff or whether they are putting you on. Well, here's my take on "Condensed Chaos," from a non-practitioner's point of view. In brief, if you took a ballpoint pen and crossed out the word "magick" on every page of the book, you would have

terse but comprehensive outline about what you need to do to assert your will in world. The secret is to maintain a clear intention of what you want; when this is absolutely clear, all of your actions naturally work towards your ends. However, maintaining a clear intention is easier said than done, since your brain, which was originally designed to help you climb down from the trees and throw rocks at small mammals, is not so good at dealing with life off the savannah. Much of the book is about the necessity to discipline your mind so that you can achieve this clarity of intention (plus some techniques for doing this). There are also techniques for tricking your mind, so that it lets you do what you want without it getting in the way. I was surprised to find myself thinking, "Yes, this all makes sense" for most of the things he talked about. For example, he describes creating a sigil (a magical symbol) or a mantra derived from statement of purpose and then focusing on the sigil or mantra rather than the statement of purpose. My take on this is that the sigil is form of subliminal suggestion. Many times when you try to push yourself into doing something, your brain pushes back.

Condensed Chaos opens by describing magic as being about change, not merely the "Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will" Crowley spoke of, but a more refined version, describing it more in terms of liberation, saying "Through magic we may come to explore the possibilities of freedom" (pg. 11). Then moves into a brief history of chaos magick, from A. O. Spare to Crowley to Carroll to Eris and Discordianism, laying the groundwork for chaos magick as we've come to know it and how it got that way. Six "Core Principles of Chaos Magic" are outlined, the first being "Avoidance of Dogmatism" while somewhat ironic in a list of "core principles" is a common ideal, and indeed few chaotes would contest these points. The fourth principle especially, "Diverse Approaches", is another reoccurring theme in chaos magick. As Hine sagely notes: "If you use only one magical model, sooner or later the Universe will present you with something that won't fit your parameters." (pg. 25) Though he also recognizes that "Chaos Magick not about discarding all rules and restraints, but the process of discovering the most effective guidelines and disciplines which enable you to effect change in the world." (pg. 26) While liberation and freedom are possible, it does not come without possible consequence, as described in the section on dangers and pitfalls. Hine covers many of the possible hazards of magickal practice, detailing what to look out for and what to avoid, adequately preparing the would-be practitioner as much as possible, or at the very least, letting hir know what might be expected, and how to recognize signs of idiocy.

I'm sorry to say, I expected much more from this book. As another reviewer already mentioned, Condensed Chaos is actually a re-print of a previous, and in my opinion, far better work by the same author called, "Oven-Ready Chaos." I guess by "condensed" he meant to say, additional comments inserted and added on to a pre-existing work. The confusing aspect comes from the differences in demeanor the author displays in combining the two works. In Oven-Ready Chaos, his writing style is cohesive, comical, and entertaining. Light-heartedly poking fun at "established" forms of magical practice and dogma. In short, it's a great read. In Condensed Chaos, the book is jovial one moment, and harshly critical the next. It starts out with a wonderful introduction to Chaos Magic and how "Nothing is true. Everything is Permitted." And suddenly changes tone, for instance, when dictating how to create and launch a servitor in very specific, "this is how it's done," terms. Still, there are aspects I really enjoy in this book. The summoning of GOFLOWOLFOG, the spirit of smooth travel and overcoming traffic jams is a hilarious and useful example of Chaos Magic in practical application. Unfortunately, this is the exception and not the rule when it comes to Condensed Chaos. Most of it seems to be spent on a method of addressing personal behavioral or emotional problems by labelling them as "demons," and then dealing with them in a variety of ways, as separate entities within the whole of one's psyche. I'm sure some people would find this approach helpful.

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