

# Fragments of Eden

## Spiritual resistance against decay of things

### Introduction

Life bears the marks of a constant tension between fragmentation and coherence, between cognitive overload and the longing for inner order. Yet this tension extends beyond social or psychological factors. It arises from fundamental principles in physics (such as entropy), mathematics (Noether's theorem), and theology (eschatology). This essay argues that the human tendency to seek symmetry and meaning in a world of increasing disorder constitutes both a cognitive and spiritual resistance against the all-pervasive law of entropy.

### Entropy as Physical and Mental Principle

The second law of thermodynamics states that entropy—a measure of disorder—will always increase in a closed system (Boltzmann, 1872). This principle applies to all physical systems: heat disperses, structures decay, and energy differentiates into balanced but formless states. One could argue that this law represents a universal tendency toward disintegration.

Strikingly, this tendency manifests not only in material processes but also in psychological and cultural phenomena. The digital information environment in which many people dwell is a prime example. Due to stimulus overload and a consumption-driven focus, it becomes increasingly difficult to dwell on a single thought or idea for long (Carr, 2010). The internet reshapes the brain to process information faster, but it undermines the capacity for deeper thought. This cognitive fragmentation can be metaphorically understood as a form of mental entropy—a scattering of attention, identity, and depth.

### The Human Drive for Symmetry and Order

Opposing this natural drift toward chaos is the immanent human drive to seek symmetry, balance, and harmony. In nearly all domains of human creativity—music, architecture, religion, mathematics—symmetry is a foundational principle. Evolutionary psychology explains this preference as an adaptive trait and form of self-organization: symmetry is associated with health, stability, and predictability (Rhodes et al., 1999). In nature, symmetry often correlates with increased chances of survival (Schilthuizen, 2019).

Yet the desire for order is not merely biological. In mathematics and physics, this tendency toward order is most explicitly expressed in Emmy Noether's theorem (1918), which states that every continuous symmetry in the laws of nature corresponds to a

conservation law. Temporal symmetry leads to conservation of energy; spatial symmetry to conservation of momentum. This fundamental relationship between order and sustainability points to an underlying structure of reality in which symmetry is not merely aesthetic but guarantees stability. The connection between symmetry and aesthetics is also evident in mathematics—for instance, in Pythagorean theory, which links symmetry to harmony and universal beauty.

When this principle is translated into human thought, a striking analogy emerges. Just as physical symmetry ensures conservation, mental symmetry—consistent beliefs, balanced emotions, clear structures—contributes to the preservation of identity and moral orientation.

### Theological Perspectives: Eschatology as Ultimate Restoration of Symmetry

The longing for order and meaning is also theological in nature. Most religious traditions contain narrative structures in which an original state of harmony (such as the Garden of Eden in Christianity) is lost and ultimately restored in an eschatological future—the end of time. Time is cyclical in various religious traditions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism recognizes four great epochs (yugas), with the end times marked by temporary destruction followed by the rebirth of the world. In Buddhism, time is also cyclical, but the emphasis lies more on the individual path to enlightenment than on cosmic destruction. The Buddhist end time thus signifies the end of the teaching rather than the end of the world itself. Christian eschatology does not speak of cyclical return but of linear fulfillment: a New Creation in which lost order is restored in glorified form (Revelation 21:1–5).

Eschatological vision thus functions as a spiritual counterforce to the principle of entropy. Where physics asserts that everything falls apart, theology maintains the belief that everything will ultimately be reunited. Theologian Jürgen Moltmann (1967) describes eschatology as the “fundamental tone of all theology”: it keeps hope alive that the direction of existence does not culminate in decay but in fulfillment.

In this context, every act of contemplation, prayer, art, or love becomes a small eschatological gesture—a stepping away from inevitable decay and a reaching toward the unity to come. Viewed this way, the human spirit, with its capacity for reflection and imagination, becomes an active element in the struggle against entropic disintegration.

### External Dependence and the Weakening of Inner Structure

Yet in contemporary culture, this inner symmetry is at risk of weakening. Increasing dependence on external cognitive systems—such as search engines and artificial intelligence—leads to an outsourcing of thought. Nicholas Carr (2010) already warned that the internet makes us more superficial: the constant stream of information encourages fast but fleeting thought patterns. The human tendency to make choices

amid inevitable decay leads to mental disintegration, as it diminishes the power to think in unity—a counterintuitive act given the entropic drift of things.

Instead of enduring inner silence—a spiritual strength from which true structure can emerge—we focus on algorithmically organized coherence. This is a subtle form of cognitive entropy: not the sudden collapse of thought, but a slow, unnoticed deconstruction of mental capacity. The soul transforms from a center of synthesis into a conduit for stimuli. In other words, we turn the soul into a participant in the struggle over things—and ultimately, the last things. These spiritual concerns are also addressed in theological literature and writings.

And yet, the longing for order persists. Precisely in the discomfort we feel amid fragmentation, an intuitive sense speaks that another state of being is possible—one in which we live from a centered symmetry, connected to both origin and destiny. War is a desperate attempt to preserve the last things. Lasting peace is a continuous resistance against decay, preserving the meaning of symmetrical connection.

#### Striving for the Preservation of Symmetry as Spiritual Imprint

In a world physically and culturally governed by entropy, the search for order may seem a lost battle. But the opposite is true. Humanity is not merely subject to the laws of disintegration but also bears resistance and a spark of paradise. Just as Noether's theorem reveals an immutable core beneath the flow of physical processes, the human longing for symmetry unveils a deeper structure in existence. This trait differs from the direction of material reality—decay. It is a spiritual trait, pointing toward origin and destiny, and can be seen as a gift.

To think symmetrically—to connect past and future, body and soul, time and eternity—requires discipline and unified thought. It is not a nostalgic yearning for paradise without spiritual effort, but a conscious act of participation in the restoration of meaning and purpose in both cosmic and spiritual context.

Conscious attention, being present for another, every choice for silence and meaning, every action aligned with symmetrical patterns—these form a constellation of symmetry that entropy can never fully destroy. In seeking form amid fragmentation, we become co-creators of a reality in which decay does not have the final word, but meaning and purpose do.

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