

All things have a tendency to drift towards chaos. I first started seeing this after taking an engineering class, when we went over the laws of thermodynamics. The second law of thermodynamics was that within a closed system, everything is subject to entropy, or the decay of order and organization. This led to an existential crisis, knowing that the universe and everything in it was destined to cease in a slow, drawn out cycle of exchanging energy and mass until nothing makes sense. But there's also peace in this, knowing that everyone has a shared destiny and life can be its own reward. This entropy, this eternal spiral downward can be found in a metaphorical sense in many things, in the way we interact in society, the ways societies interact with each other, the way we interact with nature, and even the way nature interacts with itself.

The natural state of the universe is hydrogen. Hot, dead gas in a massive cloud floating in a vast dark void. The fact that objects have coalesced at all means that order has already started breaking down. Living things are in stark contrast of nature. A self contained being that converts chemicals into energy by stealing from other living things, which are stealing from more living things, which are harvesting radiation from a distant nuclear reaction, is very, very chaotic. An animal that has the cognitive ability to deny the fact that it is still an animal and instead prefers to hold itself as a higher creature is also chaotic. If that animal were to destroy its own home in the name of progress and culture, ever accelerating towards its own demise, that would truly be entropic. And that's what we are. Entropic.

We like to think of ourselves as invincible. Our nation, our way of life, our culture is going to last forever because it's the only thing we know. Dozens of empires bigger than ours have fallen because of that confidence but we will be special because we are *us*. *Our* civilization is destined to be the best one *ever* because we are already the greatest one in the world. If everyone believes that they are destined for greatness, then they'll all dismiss each other as a passing fad, here today and gone tomorrow. After all, why cooperate with someone who keeps doing civilization wrong.

Over the course of history, humanity has been taking more and more resources from nature. We may have caused the extinction of many ice age creatures like mammoths and giant ground sloths. But in the last three hundred years our consumption has increased dramatically. Forests were cut down to build war machines. The ground was carved out to manufacture weapons. In the last century our consumption of fossil fuels has gone up exponentially, causing irreversible damage to the environment and the ozone layer. We have the technology to reduce the impact of the damage we have already done, but there is more money to be made off of natural disaster than there is in saving the world.

Chaos has meant many different things to many different people across millenia. It has been represented by wrathful gods, caused by foolish leaders, and blamed on rabble rousers. Any order we can create within our lives will eventually fade away with us, leaving behind only memories that will also some day fade. The knowledge of entropy seems terrifying, but it can be a symbol of hope as well. Knowing that your personal suffering and the suffering of others is

temporary can be reassuring, and the fact that some things cannot change can bring peace to the parts of you that wishes things were different. And sometimes chaos can just make life a little more interesting.