

Braden Payne

The Duality of Mankind

Throughout modern history, the human population has seen both major highs and lows. We, as a civilization, have incorporated massive innovations whilst also experiencing perilous turns of events that make us question our very nature as a society. The innovation and will to explore the unknown that fuels the human spirit is held back by the degenerative beliefs that epitomize so many. In the eyes of a majority of mankind, for every miraculous modernization that society exhibits, we take an equally abysmal step backwards. When discussing the notion of whether the human population is better or worse than it was in 1995, one must analyze the accomplishments and downfalls of us as a civilization.

The world is more paradoxical and contrasting than ever before. Whereas many first-world countries have taken radical steps forward in the fight against deprivation and repression, countless other countries have increasingly worsened in regards to such issues as racism, nuclear proliferation, and more. We live in a world where society possesses the means to destroy the planet many times over. Climate change has only gotten increasingly worse due to the miniscule efforts done to reduce it. If society wants to hold back the inevitable apocalypse so many are intent on bringing about, we must erase the ignorance that has pervaded our civilization for so long. Many do not comprehend the long term consequences of actions such as deforestation, overconsumption, and pollution. We, as a people, can fight against climate change and nuclear devastation that threatens humankind.

The real world issues the world faces are balanced out with the technological and cultural advances we have made as a society. Many countries are more modernized than ever before, thanks to the incredible work of many devoted individuals committed to the pursuit of a better world. Human ingenuity is one of the most important traits of mankind. But where this perseverance is directed is cause for concern. Many around the world fail to combine this ingenuity with the compassion that is so crucial to society. If we lose sight of the bonds we share with our fellow man, we will continue on the road to a complete societal breakdown. If we want to avoid this desolate future, we must never give up what makes us human: our imagination and creativity. Society has the capability to right the wrongs of the past. The question is whether we have the will to make ourselves better as a species.

Contrary to what most believe, humans are their own worst enemy. Human beings possess the means to achieve nearly anything we put our minds to; we are only limited by ourselves. In our modern society, the world is more diverse and unique than ever before. There is a freedom of thought and expression that has never been as present throughout recorded history. We are simultaneously the best and worst thing that has ever happened to Earth. We must recognize our flaws as a species and learn from them. The radical beliefs of suppression are precepts of the past, and only bring about the horrific acts of terrorism that still happen nearly every day. The world is more morally grey than ever before. The countries of the world must come together if they wish to correct humanity's downfalls.

There is great beauty to be found in human society. We are a civilization of pioneers, artists, and explorers that push the boundaries of what is perceived to be possible every day. We are a species that pride ourselves on our ability to make the improbable commonplace. I don't

believe there is any quantifiable way to say whether the modern world is better or worse than it was in modern times. I believe all that matters is that we have the potential to make the world a better place for those who come after us, just as we have the ability to make it worse. The choice is in our hands: what we decide today is what will determine the future of our world.