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Intro:

Most people would agree that the socio-eco-political climate of the world is very different from that of 10th century Mexico or even the 17th century pacific. In many respects it is undoubtedly true, that modern societies are vastly different than the Easter Islanders or the Maya for example. Can modern states compare to these societies at all, or are the ancients’ mistakes advantageous for the moderns to learn from? This is a fundamental question in Jared Diamond’s “Collapse.” In many ways a reading of Diamond could depict a hapless 21st century as the “train-wreck one just cannot look away from.” In many ways it seems that, even with the lessons from the past collapses humans are still on a road to catastrophe, particularly of a ecological variation. Though moderns tend to interpret and act differently, it appears that society cannot stay off its current crash course.

BP1: What is a collapse?

Definition

Five-point framework

BP2: The things we can learn from the Easter Islanders. What did they do wrong?

Ex1: Stone head building

Extreme waste of resources

Ex2: Deforestation

BP3: The things the Maya did wrong.

Ex1: Population growth

Ex2: Deforestation and hillside erosion

Ex3: Increased fighting

Ex4: Climate change

Ex5: failure to solve problems

BP4: How are we similar?

Ex1: Population

Ex2: Climate change and deforestation

Ex3: Increased fighting

Ex4: Inaction

BP5: How are we different than these societies?

Ex1: Destructive ability

Ex2: Technology

Ex3: globalization

Ex4: knowledge of history

BP6: The danger of inaction.

Ex1: Diamond is cautiously optimistic

Ex2: The Malthusian and Cornucopian stand-point

will we always be able to find a new solution? (Diamond 506).

Ex3: Problems will become acute within the lifespan of young adults alive today (Diamond 513)

Conclusion:

Societal collapse could indeed be a horrifying reality for those who are too willing to write off what has happened by saying, “The past is a foreign country they do things differently there.” The truth of this statement is a moot point. An aspiring historian must hope that human kind will learn from the past, act decisively, and stop the train wreck.