

## The Glory That Was Greece and Rome

In their day, the ancient Greeks and Romans took immense pride in their cultural achievements and philosophical ideas. Their marble sculptures, tragic theatre, and pioneering forays into democracy were a testament to human potential unseen in other contemporary civilizations. Great thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero laid the foundations of Western thought that still reverberate today.

And yet, for all their grandeur, the Greek and Roman civilizations rested upon shaky foundations—bloody warmongering, repressive class structures, slavery, misogyny, and an adherence to pagan mythologies that seem outdated from our modern perspective. While we owe much to their philosophical and cultural legacies, the present era has glaringly outpaced the ancient world in virtually every metric of human welfare and enlightenment.

## A Life of Toil, Ignorance and Early Death

Let's imagine transporting a Greek or Roman citizen to our modern cities and societies. At first, they may gawk at our towering skyscrapers, tarmacked roads stretching towards the horizon, and glittering displays of electric illumination. But their astonishment would only grow as the technological marvels compound.

We take for granted our miracle of human flight, casually boarding metal leviathans to cross continents in hours. Our ancestors could scarcely conceive of such wonders beyond the realm of mythology. Yet we've accomplished far more—landing humans on the moon itself and sending robotic emissaries to explore the solar system.

While the ancients had few remedies beyond folk medicine, we can cure diseases, perform organ transplants, and radically extend the human lifespan through modern healthcare. Our relative

prosperity and abundant food supplies would be shocking compared to the cycles of famine and deprivation in antiquity.

The average person today is exponentially more literate and educated than all but a tiny elite of ancient scholars. We can freely access the world's knowledge at our fingertips via the internet—a capillary network connecting all corners of our global civilization in an exchange of ideas unfathomable to the pre-modern mind.

### Morality and the Value of Human Life

Perhaps most importantly, the ancient eyes would finally perceive the moral advances demarking our modern ethics. The liberating ideals of human equality, democracy, and personal liberty so often trampled in ancient times have, despite ongoing struggles, become core tenets of the world we inhabit.

Gone are the days when the masses were seen as mere beasts of burden existing to serve the whims of self-proclaimed aristocracies. Slavery itself is now universally condemned after fueling centuries of barbarism. Our ancestors may recoil at the thought of women receiving education and equal rights, rather than serving as second-class property of men.

While poverty and injustice still persist, the world has at least recognized these as problems to be solved. This represents a radical philosophical shift from ancient writers who unapologetically enshrined social hierarchies and iniquities as natural orders of existence.

### Humanity's Evolving Ethical Consciousness

Though impressed by our material abundance and scientific mastery, the ancient Greek or Roman may well question the apparent moral decadence and declining civic virtues of modern

societies. Beholding our disposable consumer culture of individual indulgence, they could bemoan how far we've fallen from the austere, collectivist spirit that drove their civilizations.

Yet we moderns may counter that this apparent decline simply reflects an evolution of human consciousness. Yes, we are less inclined to valorize violence, conquest, blind patriotism, or sworn duty to the state over our individual liberties—but is this truly decadence?

We have learned from history's bloodiest chapters that the costs of empire-building, colonialism, and ethnocentrism tend to outweigh their glory. While brute strength was an asset in the unpacified ancient world, the forces shaping our era favor empathy, cooperation, curiosity, and intellectual ingenuity.

Ultimately, our ancient forebearer may come to embrace the abundance of art, thought, diversity, and self-actualization made possible in modern times. While our flaws may seem unforgivable through their lens, our era represents tangible progress beyond their primitive superstitions and subjugations of humanity.

And although their civilizations represented staggering accomplishments in their day, our newly arrived Greek or Roman can surely only gape in awe at the advancements yet to come as our species journeys onward into an ever-more enlightened future.

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