The Fall of Modern America

Ancient Rome was considered the greatest and most powerful civilization of its time. Many people say this exact thing about America today. It is odd that such a great civilization as Rome became nonexistent. Just remnants of this great civilization remain. The mistakes Rome made should be duly noted and taken into consideration, but, for some reason, America seems to be following very closely in the footsteps of the once great civilization. America and Rome both share a superiority complex. Rome once believed that they were the best, whilst America considers itself the greatest today. Along with the massive superiority complex, both of these great civilizations seem to focus many of their attention and resources on entertainment.

Entertainment has its place, but it should most definitely not be the most important aspect. It will truly be amazing if America one day become an ancient civilization that the future reads about in their history classes.

Ancient Rome was considered the most powerful civilization of its time. Its neighbors feared and revered it. It is not necessarily a negative trait to be looked up to and feared. This quality only becomes negative when power goes to rulers’ heads. They began to think that they were better than they actually were. They began to treat other civilizations as less than they were. They become arrogant and prideful, and it doesn’t take long at all for those two attributes to catch up with and consume the decision making process. Eventually, this attitude begins to actually make rulers weaker and weaker, but, because of their egos, they just continue to believe
that they are still the greatest civilization in the world. As such, they and their society, become vulnerable to enemies, and these enemies will take notice and begin to plot a downfall. Rome was truly the greatest civilization of its time, and Romans could very well still be a thriving superpower today if it wasn’t for their arrogance and pride. When they eventually weakened themselves enough, their enemies moved in. It doesn’t take much to invade a city when the city itself has already done half the battle for you.

America is believed to be the greatest country on planet earth, and that belief is getting to our heads. According to Cullen Murphy, “‘America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome’”(Murphy 7). America is the superpower of the world. We dominate essentially everything from money to military power. This perspective is drastically affecting our judgment, just like it did the Romans. Americans believe they are and will always be the greatest. Such arrogance may lead to the downfall of America. There are leaders and countries that disagree with American laws and are just waiting to pounce the moment they see an ounce of weakness. However, the smarter opponents will just be patient and let American destroy itself. According to Javier Martin, “Most of Americans see America as the greatest country on the planet, and they think this gives us the right to interfere in other countries problems”(Martin). America often interferes with other countries’ problems, whether asked for help or not.

Not only did Rome become arrogant and prideful, they also began to divert their attention away from where it needed to be. Entertainment was what the people cared about; they didn’t care how their city was run as long as they were having a good time. According to David Potter, “Buildings for public entertainment remain some of the most spectacular monuments to survive from the Roman Empire. Representing, as they do, an enormous expenditure of society’s
resources on pleasure they are a vivid reminder of the centrality of public entertainment for the exposition and formation of social values” (Potter 256). A huge portion of Rome’s government spent money on incredibly lavish and impressive buildings that were solely used for entertainment. Perhaps the single greatest source of entertainment was their Coliseum. They spent so much of their money on these incredible buildings and ventures that other important aspects of their lives were ignored. The Roman gladiators, though most were slaves that were forced to compete, entertained millions of Romans on a daily basis. These massive battles allowed the Roman citizens to forget their troubles, if only for a little while. Roman citizens began to care less and less about what their government did, as long as their government kept them entertained. Entertainment should never rank above the quality of government.

America too has begun to disregard the most important aspects of everyday life. Many Americans have little to no interest whatsoever in the running of the government. The only time where most Americans show any semblance of caring at all is every four years. According to Brittany Sosebee, “Unless there is a presidential election I have absolutely no interest in the government”(Sosebee). What people focus on today are not the changes in government but what the people in the entertainment industry are up to. Especially with websites like Facebook or Twitter, you can literally find the people you’re interested in, and, whenever they do anything, you can be instantly updated via the internet. American television stars are, in essence, exactly what the roman gladiators were. They are a distraction from the everyday problems that we face. However, just because we forget about problems doesn’t make them any less real. These concerns are just sitting unchecked while the vast majority of Americans are oblivious. America’s obsession with entertainment is a virus that is slowly, but surely, spreading to everyone. Our country and its governance deserves significantly more attention than what Miley
Cyrus is currently doing. She makes absolutely no impact whatsoever on anything that is relevant to America, but most people know her name and know who she is, content not to even know the governor of their state. America really needs to refocus its attention on the more important aspects of the country.

America and Ancient Rome share a vast amount of similarities. We are going through and making the exact same mistakes that Rome made all those years ago. There is an old saying, “History repeats itself”; well, that saying should never be accurate. We know the history, and we know why Rome fell. We should learn from the mistakes that the Romans made so that two thousand years from now America is still standing strong and tall as the greatest civilization on the planet. Much needs to happen before we can even hope to have that much time left. We need to fix our arrogance and refocus our attention. It’s not too late to save us from our fall. Let us take the lessons that Rome left behind and put them to good use. One or two people can’t make these lessons count for everyone though. It has to be a majority of Americans who decide to grow up, to decide that they want to improve their country, and to work to ensure America continues to be a country worth looking up to.
Works Cited


Sosebee, Brittany. Text Message. 8 Nov. 2013

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