

## Chapter 1 : The Decline of Nature: Environmental History and the Western Worldview | Academica Press

*The Decline of Nature is an account of Western attitudes and behavior toward nature, from the deforestation of Western Europe during the High Middle Ages through the Scientific Revolution and the technological exploitation of nature in the 19th and 20th centuries, and on to the Environmental Movement.*

Human well-being at risk: Landmark reports highlight options to protect and restore nature and its vital contributions to people Infographic: Katharina Funk Icons designed by Freepik from www. The extensively peer-reviewed reports are providing answers for the questions: Why is biodiversity important? Where are we making progress? What are the main threats and opportunities for biodiversity? And how can we adjust our policies for a more sustainable future? The assessments are carrying an important and urgent message: Biodiversity is still rapidly declining in all regions of the world. And it is unlikely to stop. Threats for biodiversity loss are manifold: Habitat loss, overexploitation and unsustainable use of natural resources; air, land and water pollution and in increasing numbers and impacts of invasive alien species and climate change are just a few examples. We know “ in theory ” how to protect our nature and there are a number of positive examples out there. Jake Rice Canada , co-chair of the Americas assessment In a business as usual scenario, climate change will be the fastest driver of biodiversity decline in the Americas by There are local communities, whose practices, such as polyculture or agroforestry, have the potential to increase biodiversity again. This will cause a loss of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices that are originally enhancing biodiversity. This area is as big as Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands together. Especially the marine and coastal ecosystems “ having a significant economic importance ” are under threat. A continuous degradation can therefore have serious implications for tourism as well as for fisheries, food security and the overall marine biodiversity. Madhav Karki Nepal , co-chair of the Asia-Pacific assessment An overall decline of biodiversity was reported, but there was also a success in increasing protected areas. There are, however, doubts whether these efforts are sufficient to stop the overall decrease of biodiversity. Apart from that, the biggest threat to biodiversity is the increasing variety and abundance of invasive alien species. The most threatened ecosystems are forests, alpine ecosystems, inland freshwater and wetlands, as well as coastal systems. Markus Fischer Switzerland , co-chair of the Europe and Central Asia assessment Europe and Central Asia are facing a rapid decline of biodiversity mainly due to increasing conventional agricultural and forestry practices. But there are also some examples of sustainable agricultural and forestry practices. Nevertheless, Europe and Central Asia are facing a loss of associated indigenous and local knowledge and practices. The report stresses that economic growth needs to be decoupled from the degradation of biodiversity to facilitate sustainable development. My main interests are climate policy, sustainability, environmental ethics and social-ecological systems.

**Chapter 2 : Maimonides on the "Decline of the Generations" and the Nature of Rabbinic Authority**

*The Decline of Nature is a masterful critique of the stories that own us. LaFreniere's analytical effort is a veritable tour de force." From the Foreword by Professor Max Oelschlaeger, Northern Arizona University.*

An important factor in the decline was the increasing lack of ability and power of the sultans themselves. But, while the grand vizier was able to stand in for the sultan in official functions, he could not take his place as the focus of loyalty for all the different classes and groups in the empire. While the sipahis did not entirely disappear as a military force, the Janissaries and the associated artillery corps became the most important segments of the Ottoman army. In consequence, corruption and nepotism took hold at all levels of administration. Those in power found it more convenient to control the princes by keeping them uneducated and inexperienced, and the old tradition by which young princes were educated in the field was replaced by a system in which all the princes were isolated in the private apartments of the harem and limited to such education as its permanent inhabitants could provide. No matter who controlled the apparatus of government during that time, however, the results were the same—a growing paralysis of administration throughout the empire, increasing anarchy and misrule, and the fracture of society into discrete and increasingly hostile communities. Economic difficulties Under such conditions it was inevitable that the Ottoman government could not meet the increasingly difficult problems that plagued the empire in the 16th and 17th centuries. Economic difficulties began in the late 16th century, when the Dutch and British completely closed the old international trade routes through the Middle East. As a result, the prosperity of the Middle Eastern provinces declined. The Ottoman economy was disrupted by inflation, caused by the influx of precious metals into Europe from the Americas and by an increasing imbalance of trade between East and West. All those depending on salaries found themselves underpaid, resulting in further theft, overtaxation, and corruption. Holders of the timars and tax farms started using them as sources of revenue to be exploited as rapidly as possible, rather than as long-term holdings whose prosperity had to be maintained to provide for the future. Inflation also weakened the traditional industries and trades. Functioning under strict price regulations, the guilds were unable to provide quality goods at prices low enough to compete with the cheap European manufactured goods that entered the empire without restriction because of the Capitulations agreements. In consequence, traditional Ottoman industry fell into rapid decline. Social unrest Those conditions were exacerbated by large population growth during the 16th and 17th centuries, part of the general population rise that occurred in much of Europe at that time. The amount of subsistence available not only failed to expand to meet the needs of the rising population but in fact fell as the result of the anarchic political and economic conditions. Social distress increased and disorder resulted. Landless and jobless peasants fled off the land, as did cultivators subjected to confiscatory taxation at the hands of timariots and tax farmers, thus reducing food supplies even more. Many peasants fled to the cities, exacerbating the food shortage, and reacted against their troubles by rising against the established order. The central government became weaker, and as more peasants joined rebel bands they were able to take over large parts of the empire, keeping all the remaining tax revenues for themselves and often cutting off the regular food supplies to the cities and the Ottoman armies still guarding the frontiers. Under such conditions the armies broke up, with most of the salaried positions in the Janissary and other corps becoming no more than new sources of revenue, without their holders performing any military services in return. Thus, the Ottoman armies came to be composed primarily of fighting contingents supplied by the vassals of the sultan, particularly the Crimean Tatar khans, together with whatever rabble could be dragged from the streets of the cities whenever required by campaigns. In many ways the substratum of Ottoman society—formed by the millets and various economic, social, and religious guilds and buttressed by the organization of the Ottoman ulama—cushioned the mass of the people and the ruling class itself from the worst effects of that multisided disintegration and enabled the empire to survive much longer than otherwise would have been possible. External relations Despite those difficulties, the internal Ottoman weakness was evident to only the most discerning Ottoman and foreign observers during much of the 17th century. Most Europeans continued to fear the Ottoman army as they had two centuries earlier, and, although

its ability was reduced, it remained strong enough to prevent the provincial rebels from assuming complete control and even to make a few more significant conquests in both East and West. The empire suffered defeats for the first time, but it retained reserve strength sufficient for it to recoup when needed and to prevent the loss of any integral parts of the empire. Despite the upsets then disturbing the body politic, the Ottomans occasionally undertook new campaigns. He thus brought the empire to the peak of its territorial extent and added wealthy new provinces whose revenues, for a half century at least, rescued the Ottoman treasury from the worst of its financial troubles and gave the empire a respite during which it could attempt to remedy its worst problems. Each of those early reformers rose as the result of crises and military defeats that threatened the very existence of the empire. Each was given the power needed to introduce reforms because of the fears of the ruling class that the empire, on which the privileges of the ruling class depended, was in mortal danger. In a war between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs that began in 1683, the Austrians were able to take much of central Hungary and Romania, and only an accidental Ottoman triumph in 1686 enabled the sultan to recoup. The Habsburgs then agreed to the Treaty of Zsitvatorok, by which Ottoman rule of Hungary and Romania was restored. The treaty itself, however, like the events that led up to it, for the first time demonstrated to Europe the extent of Ottoman weakness and thus exposed the Ottomans to new dangers in subsequent years. Finally, a long war with Venice in 1699, occasioned by Ottoman efforts to capture Crete, exposed Istanbul to a major Venetian naval attack. Although the Venetians finally were pushed back in a naval campaign culminating in the Ottoman conquest of Crete, they still posed a major threat that, like those which had occurred earlier in the century, stimulated the ruling class to accept needed reforms. The reforms introduced during the 17th century were too limited in nature and scope, however, to permanently arrest the Ottoman decline. The reforms essentially were no more than efforts to restore the inherited system of government and society that had operated successfully in the past. Efforts were made to restore the timar and tax farm systems as the basis of the administration and army and to limit taxes to the limits imposed by law. Provincial revolts were suppressed, peasants were forced back to the land, and cultivation was increased. Debased coins were replaced by coins of full value. Industry and trade were encouraged, corrupt officials executed, and insubordination driven out. Such reforms were sufficient to end the immediate difficulties. But they were successful only temporarily because the reformers were allowed to act against only the results of the decay and not its cause, the continued monopoly of the self-interested ruling class. As soon as the worst consequences of decay had been alleviated, the old groups resumed power and their old ways. Moreover, the reformers did not understand that the Europe now faced by the Ottomans was far more powerful than the entity that the great sultans of the past had defeated; even if the reforms had been more permanently successful, they could not have corrected the increasing Ottoman weakness relative to the powerful nation-states then rising in Europe. Such an understanding was to come to the Ottoman reformers only in the 19th century. Military defeats and the emergence of the Eastern Question, however, produced at least a semblance of revival. His effort quickly overextended the fragile bases of the Ottoman revival. The aroused defenders, led by the Polish king Jan Sobieski ruled in 1685, not only held out but also built a major European coalition that was to bring destruction to the Ottoman Empire during the 18th century. The Habsburgs set out to reconquer Hungary, Serbia, and the Balkans, while Venice hoped to regain its naval bases along the Adriatic coast and in the Morea and to resume its naval and commercial power in the Levant, and Russia worked to extend its reach through the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles to the Aegean. Only the European enemies of the coalition, led by France and Sweden, tried to support Ottoman integrity. They were backed in that stance by neutral Britain and the Netherlands, who sought to guard the commercial privileges that they had secured from the sultan through the Capitulations by preventing any country from gaining control of the entire Ottoman Empire and thereby becoming dominant in Europe. Russia and Austria fought the Ottomans not only by direct military attack but also by fomenting dissatisfaction and revolt on the part of the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan. Against such subversion, the Ottomans could only try to conciliate their subjects where possible and repress them when conciliation was rejected, taking advantage at every opportunity of each rivalry that arose between the Habsburgs and Russians for predominance in the Balkan provinces of the empire. Ottoman sieges of Vienna withstood several sieges by the

Ottoman Turks, most notably in 1683-1699 it fought the armies of the Holy League in a disastrous war that culminated in the Treaty of Carlowitz. In 1711 it fought Russia again, and at the Treaty of the Pruth it regained some territories previously lost. By the Ottomans had lost all of their possessions on the northern coast of the Black Sea, from the Romanian principalities to the Caucasus, including Bessarabia, southern Ukraine, and the Crimean Peninsula the soldiers of which had provided the strongest element in the Ottoman army during the 17th century. In the later Ottoman period, however, a new factor of decline was added: Those individuals took more or less permanent control of large areas, creating a situation that in many ways resembled European feudalism much more than the traditional Ottoman timar system ever did. In the Balkans and Anatolia local rulers solidified their positions by taking advantage of currents of local nationalism that were arising among the Balkan Christians. The notables formed private armies of mercenaries and slaves, which they sometimes used to provide important contributions to the Ottoman armies in return for recognition of their autonomy by the sultans. Those rulers were able to exercise almost complete authority, collecting taxes for themselves and sending only nominal payments to the Ottoman treasury, thus further increasing its problems. The central government maintained its position when it could by playing off the local rebels against each other, using the leverage of Ottoman support to its own advantage and securing considerable payments of cash and military contributions when needed. The treasury, therefore, did not suffer as much from those provincial revolts as might be imagined, but the revolts did disrupt the established food supplies of the empire and caused large-scale famines to starve the major cities on a regular basis. In response, the urban populace became a restless, misruled, and anarchic mass that broke loose at the slightest provocation, responding to unemployment, famine, and plague with riots and summary executions of the officials considered responsible. The violence brought attention to Ottoman difficulties but did not remedy them and in fact made things worse. The potential for reform lay only in the hands of the ruling class, but its reaction was quite different. In addition, the ruling class was completely isolated from developments outside its own sphere; it assumed that the remedies to Ottoman decline lay entirely within Ottoman practice and experience. That resulted from the basic belief of Ottoman society in its own superiority over anything outsiders could possibly produce, a belief that had far more justification in the 16th century, when it arose, than in the 18th century. All of the advances in industrial and commercial life, science and technology, and particularly political and military organization and techniques that had occurred in Europe since the Reformation were simply unknown to the Ottomans. The only direct Ottoman contacts with Europe were on the battlefield, where most Ottomans still assumed that their military reverses were caused not by the superiority of Western armies but rather by Ottoman failure to apply fully the techniques that had worked so well in the past. Thus, the 18th-century reforms largely paralleled those of the traditional Ottoman reformers of the 17th century, with only occasional efforts to add new military organizations and to make use of specific European weapons and techniques of undeniable superiority. Contacts with the West For some Ottomans, that isolation was at least partially broken down when some channels of contact opened with the West during the 18th century. A few Ottoman ambassadors went to Europe to participate in negotiations and sign treaties; more and more European merchants, travelers, and consuls came into the Ottoman Empire; a handful of Ottoman men of science and philosophy began to correspond with their Western counterparts; and members of the Ottoman minorities entered into correspondence with their relatives in the West. But such contacts had limited consequences: Those few who did understand something of what they heard usually were only voices in the wilderness, and their efforts to apply and disseminate the new knowledge had little overall effect. Such contacts led to nothing more than changes in the modes of living of a few upper-class Ottomans and to some military innovations. Sultan Ahmed III ruled 1703-1730 built several lavish summer residences on the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn an inlet that forms part of the harbour of Istanbul, and members of his immediate entourage built similarly lavish houses, holding frequent garden parties in imitation of the pleasures of Versailles in France. The new era was celebrated by Nedim, the court poet, whose poetry demonstrates a considerable awareness of his environment and an appreciation of nature. Growing tulips became an obsession with rich and poor alike, signifying Westernization, and the flower gave its name to the period. Military reforms As a result of contact with European armies and the influence of European renegades in Ottoman service, a few attempts were made

during the 18th century to adopt Western-style uniforms, weapons, and tactics. Because the members of the established military corps could not and would not surrender their old ways, entirely new corps were formed to handle the new weapons under the direction of European instructors. The new corps had no effect at all on the Janissaries and the other older corps that continued to form the bulk of the army, however; the older corps accurately perceived that the new ways threatened their privileges and security. The new corps thus were essentially special mercenary bodies built up under the direction of individual Ottomans, lasting only so long as their patrons remained in power. The bulk of the Ottoman army remained unchanged and therefore was more equipped to suppress reform at home than to challenge modern Western armies. While he was still a prince, Selim developed plans for modernizing the Ottoman army. He came to the throne during the 1792 war with Austria and Russia and had to postpone serious reform efforts until its completion. Under the guidance of European technicians, factories were erected to manufacture modern weapons and ammunition, and technical schools were opened to train Ottoman officers. Limited efforts also were made to rationalize the Ottoman administrative machinery, but largely along traditional lines. The older military corps, however, remained intact and hostile to the new force, and Selim was therefore compelled to limit its size and use. The French expedition eventually drew Selim into alliances with Great Britain and Russia, through which the French were driven out. The rise of nationalism among Ottoman subject peoples—stimulated by agents of Russia, Austria, and Revolutionary France—showed itself in the beginning of a Serbian revolution and a new war with Russia in 1812 and made it impossible for Selim to resist the wishes of the Janissaries, who still formed the bulk of his army. While Selim was imprisoned in the palace, a conservative resurgence under the sultan Mustafa IV in 1808 ended the reforms, and most of the reformers were massacred.

### Chapter 3 : Top 6 Cause of Decline of the Harappan Culture

*Biodiversity and nature's contributions continue dangerous decline, scientists warn Human well-being at risk. Landmark reports highlight options to protect and restore nature and its vital.*

This alarming trend endangers economies, livelihoods, food security and the quality of life of people everywhere, according to four landmark science reports released today, written by more than leading experts, from over countries. The result of three years of work, the four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services cover the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, as well as Europe and Central Asia -- the entire planet except the poles and the open oceans. They are at the heart not only of our survival, but of our cultures, identities and enjoyment of life. Fortunately, the evidence also shows that we know how to protect and partially restore our vital natural assets. Declining Biodiversity -- Now and in the Future The Americas "In the Americas, rich biodiversity makes an immense contribution to the quality of life, helping to reduce poverty while strengthening economies and livelihoods," said Dr. Jake Rice Canada , co-chair of the Americas assessment with Dr. Maria Elena Zaccagnini Argentina. The report highlights the fact that indigenous people and local communities have created a diversity of polyculture and agroforestry systems, which have increased biodiversity and shaped landscapes. However, the decoupling of lifestyles from the local environment has eroded, for many, their sense of place, language and indigenous local knowledge. Luthando Dziba South Africa. Marine and coastal environments make significant economic, social and cultural contributions to the people of Africa. Damage to coral reef systems, mostly due to pollution and climate change, has far-reaching implications for fisheries, food security, tourism and overall marine biodiversity. Asia-Pacific "Biodiversity and ecosystem services contributed to rapid average annual economic growth of 7. This growth, in turn, has had varying impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services," said Dr. Sonali Senaratna Sellamuttu Sri Lanka. Forest cover increased by 2. Unsustainable aquaculture practices, overfishing and destructive harvesting, threaten coastal and marine ecosystems, with projections that, if unsustainable fishing practices continue, there could be no exploitable fish stocks left in the region by as early as Intertidal zones are also rapidly deteriorating due to human activities, with coral reefs of critical ecological, cultural and economic importance, already under serious threat, and some reefs having already been lost, especially in South and South-East Asia. The report emphasizes that climate change and associated extreme events pose great threats, especially to coastal ecosystems, low-lying coastal areas and islands. Climate change is also impacting species distributions, population sizes, and the timing of reproduction and migration. Increased frequencies of pest and disease outbreaks resulting from these changes may have additional negative effects on agricultural production and human well-being, with impacts projected to worsen. Forests, alpine ecosystems, inland freshwater and wetlands, as well as coastal systems are identified as the most threatened Asia-Pacific ecosystems. Europe and Central Asia A major trend is the increasing intensity of conventional agriculture and forestry, which leads to biodiversity decline. Such decoupling, however, has not yet happened, and would require far-reaching change in policies and tax reforms at the global and national levels. Abandonment of traditional land-use systems, and loss of associated indigenous and local knowledge and practices, has been widespread in Europe and Central Asia, the report finds. Production-based subsidies driving growth in agricultural, forestry and natural resource extraction sectors tend to exacerbate conflicting land-use issues, often impinging on available territory for traditional users. Maintenance of traditional land use and lifestyles in Europe and Central Asia is strongly related to institutional adequacy and economic viability. Acting to protect and promote biodiversity is at least as important to achieving these commitments and to human wellbeing as is the fight against global climate change". The experts of the Asia-Pacific assessment point to the value of ecosystem based approaches and identify, among others, lack of solid waste management, as well as air, water and land pollution as factors undermining gains in a number of the Aichi Targets and SDGs for many countries e. Appropriate combinations of, for example, behavioural change, improved technology, research, adequate levels of finance, improved education and public awareness programs are among other options. Such measures include the establishment and effective management of protected areas and networks of wildlife corridors; restoration of

degraded ecosystems; control of invasive alien species and reintroduction of wild animals. In addition to enhancing biodiversity conservation through appropriate governance, policies and national implementation, the authors emphasize the need for better integration of indigenous and local knowledge and greater use of scenarios in African decision-making. For Asia and the Pacific, the IPBES experts point to the success of countries that achieved rapid economic growth in gradually restoring and expanding protected areas - especially forests. They emphasize that, while assisting these countries in their efforts to meet some of the SDGs and Aichi Targets, this alone will not be sufficient to reduce biodiversity loss caused by the negative impacts of monoculture. For instance, the region registered a growth of 0. The assessment report highlights integrated approaches. These include measuring national welfare beyond GDP. Governance could become more effective by using well-designed mixes of policy instruments to motivate changes in behaviour to support sustainable development. The authors also emphasize the relevance of reconciling biodiversity conservation and human rights standards through rights-based instruments, as well as capacity building for indigenous peoples and local communities. Sufficient funding is also needed to support research, monitoring, education and training. Speaking about the policy options emerging from the four regional assessments, Watson said: Cross-border collaboration is also essential, given that biodiversity challenges recognize no national boundaries. Forest areas lost in South America and Mesoamerica respectively since the s 0. When we erode biodiversity, we impact food, water, forests and livelihoods. But to tackle any challenge head on, we need to get the science right and this is why UN Environment is proud to support this series of assessments. Investing in the science of biodiversity and indigenous knowledge, means investing in people and the future we want. It is essential to helping us all adapt to the changes we face over the coming years. These four regional reports are critical to understanding the role of human activities in biodiversity loss and its conservation, and our capacity to collectively implementing solutions to address the challenges ahead. Biodiversity is also key to food security and nutrition. The maintenance of biological diversity is important for food production and for the conservation of the ecological foundations on which rural livelihoods depend. Biodiversity is under serious threat in many regions of the world and it is time for policy-makers to take action at national, regional and global levels. Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it supports are not only the foundation for our life on Earth, but critical to the livelihoods and well-being of people everywhere. For enquiries and interviews please contact:

Chapter 4 : The decline of nature - Gilbert F. LaFreniere - Google Books

*An environmental history of ideas embedded in a compact account of Western civilization's ecological impact upon the planet, particularly in Europe and its colonies.*

Other chapters examine inhalation of dusts, fumes, and emerging toxins. A central theme in this book, that of the relationship between science, technology, and the environment, is meant for both scientists and historians. Above all, this book is an expose. For in it the author discusses critical environmental health and occupational health issues of our era, revealing how industrial toxins and processes poison our environment and documenting hazards generated by old and new chemicals. He has taken on government regulatory science and action or inaction for a number of critical environmental issues of our time. Although an admirable effort, Downloaded from <http://www.elsevier.com/locate/S0167636900000000> She has published widely in the fields of environmental and occupational health history. The Decline of Nature: Environmental History and the Western Worldview. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. With his jarring declaration that Faustian Western Civilization had reached its historical twilight, Spengler inspired a strain of cultural pessimism Kulturpessimismus, which would subsequently thrive during the Weimar Republic. In The Decline of Nature: LaFreniere, professor emeritus of geology and environmental science at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, makes it abundantly clear from the outset that he does not share the postmodernist skepticism of metanarratives. The author frequently veers away from assessing possible outcomes and lurches toward deducing collective fates. Such eco-pessimism begs the question: Edward D. He is currently completing a book titled Strangers on Familiar Soil: Chile and the Making of California, In Dark Alaska: By George Robert Campbell. University of Pennsylvania Press, Nature and Culture in America series. Illustrations, notes, and index. University Press of Colorado, Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. These books share at least two major themes: Far from portraying Alaska as an isolated and ignored corner of the continent, both Campbell and Ross emphasize its strong connections with a larger national experience.

### Chapter 5 : The Decline of Nature - Oak Publishing

*The Decline of War and Conceptions of Human Nature* Steven Pinker Harvard University Department of Psychology, William James Hall , Harvard University, 33 Kirkland St., Cambridge MA USA.

The total numbers of more than 4, mammal, bird, fish, reptile and amphibian species declined rapidly between and , the Living Planet Report says. Current rates of species extinction are now up to 1, times higher than before human involvement in animal ecosystems became a factor. The group has called for an international treaty, modeled on the Paris climate agreement, to be drafted to protect wildlife and reverse human impacts on nature. Read More It warned that current efforts to protect the natural world are not keeping up with the speed of manmade destruction. Global warming puts nearly half of species in key places at risk: Methods of destruction The report outlines the various ways in which human activities have led to losses in animal populations. Deforestation in Borneo, designed to make way for timber and palm oil plantations, led to the loss of , orangutans between and , the report estimated. The plastic age Plastic pollution in our oceans â€” Some researchers estimate there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans by the year Hide Caption 1 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Clear and present danger â€” The South Pacific island of Tuvalu should be a model of sustainability. But plastic pollution is having a devastating effect on the formerly pristine environment, and it may be responsible for the declining health of many islanders. Hide Caption 2 of 12 Photos: The plastic age A plastic ocean â€” British producer Jo Ruxton and her team spent four years documenting the effects of plastic pollution for the documentary "A Plastic Ocean. Hide Caption 3 of 12 Photos: The plastic age No safe haven â€” The crew visited dozens of sites from the Arctic to the Mediterranean and Hawaii, without ever finding a plastic-free location. The average square kilometer of ocean contains around 20, microplastic pieces. Hide Caption 4 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Junk food â€” The film documents the effects of plastic on marine life. More than one million seabirds are estimated to be killed every year through entanglement and ingestion , often mistaking plastic for food. Hide Caption 5 of 12 Photos: The plastic age End of the line â€” Endangered species such as sea turtles could be driven to extinction by the plastic plague. Hide Caption 6 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Drowning in plastic â€” Plastic pollution has rapidly accelerated, with eight million tons entering the marine environment each year, according to scientists. This figure is set to rise as production of the material is set to double over the next 20 years. Hide Caption 7 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Burning problem â€” In many of the worst affected countries such as China and the Philippines , local people lack the infrastructure to properly dispose of plastic waste. In some cases they burn it, releasing dangerous gases associated with cancer. Hide Caption 8 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Plastic people â€” There are also concerns that people are consuming dangerous plastic through contaminated fish. A survey published in Scientific Reports journal revealed that a quarter of market fish in Indonesia and California contain plastic. Hide Caption 9 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Picking up the pieces â€” There are different ideas about how to address the crisis. National and Atmospheric Association favors beach cleaning and public education at local level, combined with challenging policymakers and plastic producers to promote conservation. Hide Caption 10 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Recycling efforts are becoming more creative. Plastic waste is now converted into building materials in Cameroon and the Philippines. Charging for plastic bags and bottles and bags has helped to reduce waste. Hide Caption 11 of 12 Photos: The plastic age Far out â€” Dutch entrepreneur Boyan Slat has a more ambitious vision. He has designed a huge trash-eating machine that he intends to deploy at the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Hide Caption 12 of 12 Wildlife is not just "nice to have," the report said, warning that human health, food and medicine supplies, as well as global financial stability, are all damaged by declines in wildlife and nature.

### Chapter 6 : The Better Angels of Our Nature - Wikipedia

*In the Nature Index, Japan's share of high-quality papers has also declined. Nature Index Japan's share of high-quality papers (AC) included in the Nature Index dropped between and , as did the United State's share.*

The succession of rise and fall is a law of nature. After years of prominence, the Harappan culture gradually declined to the point of extinction. Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Kalibangan and other centres of Harappan culture were no exception. The decline of Harappan culture has evoked the historians to find out its causes. Renowned historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee has categorized the decay of a culture as its final stage after a culture is born and grows to its highest point of efficacy. The Harappan culture was no exception to this general law of nature. Its decline set in around B. The massive floods in the Indus must have been a potent cause for the extinction of the Harappan culture. The point is proved by the silt-clay that covers the collapsed houses at Mohenjo-Daro. Repeated floods must have forced the people to flee the inundated places and set up permanent habitat elsewhere. As a consequence came the decline of Harappa. Geographically, the Harappan culture occupied an area that was prone to earthquakes as it came under a seismographic zone. Repeated seismographic vibrations must have led to erosion that brought down the buildings. Earthquakes constitute an important reason for the decline of Harappan culture. Change of the Course of the Indus: Some Historians attribute the decline of the Harappan culture to the river Indus changing its course frequently. As such the Indus delta shifted away from Mohenjo-Daro and water became scarce. Water scarcity must have led to the exodus of the Harappan people to other places. Yet, the change of course of the Indus is not reason enough for the decline in Lothal, Kalibangan, Rupar etc. Outbreak of the plague epidemic is shown as a reason for the decline of Harappan civilization. Skeletal remains from the main roads of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro as found out through archaeological efforts tell a sad story. When an epidemic like plague visits a human habitation, it leaves its trail of death everywhere. The scattered skeletal remains therefore lead some to attribute it to epidemic like plague, though there is no concrete proof of outbreak of plague in the region. Sir Mortimer Wheeler however is of the opinion that the Aryan invasion is the reason for the decline of Harappan culture. There is archaeological proof of genocide and unburied skeletal remains scattered everywhere in Mohenjo-Daro. An autopsy on these skeletons reveals damages that must have been caused by sharp objects or weapons. Knowledge and use of iron as weapons was known to the Aryans, not to the Harappan people. Defeat and death of the Harapan people must have come at the hands of the invading Aryans. The Aryan cavalry must have been an adverse point for the Harappans who did not know the use of horses. Kosambi holds this view also. The god Indra of the Vedas is also known as Purandara or destroyer of the forts. The view of Kosambi is fairly acceptable in the context of the forts of the Harappan culture. Areas of Harappan culture which were not invaded by the Aryans might have perished due to barbaric conflicts with rural and forest people. Anyway, foreign invasion goes a long way to account for the decline of the Harappan culture. The multiple causes, enumerated above, were responsible for the decline of Harappan culture. Thanks to archaeological efforts, we now know a lot about this oldest urban culture of India. Indeed their town-planning, social and religious life, the Lothal port, the unique art and architecture, artifacts and pottery have led everybody to look upon them with awe and admiration. India and the world marvels at the wonder of Harappan culture. Yet, this culture could not defeat the law of nature and was, as such, not imperishable. Most of the rich traditions left behind were later on retained by the Aryans and others.

### Chapter 7 : Wildlife populations fell by 60% from , WWF says - CNN

*The author takes so many different perspectives - historical, psychological, biological, evolutionary, etc. to explain the decline of violence over the course of human history, and it is truly amazing and engrossing to read.*

National Gallery, London For an influential group of advanced thinkers, violence is a type of backwardness. In the most modern parts of the world, these thinkers tell us, war has practically disappeared. Scientifically assessed, the number of those killed in violent conflicts was steadily dropping. The numbers are still falling, and there is reason to think they will fall further. A shift is under way, not strictly inevitable but enormously powerful. After millennia of slaughter, humankind is entering the Long Peace. This has proved to be a popular message. It is now not uncommon to find it stated, as though it were a matter of fact, that human beings are becoming less violent and more altruistic. Ranging freely from human pre-history to the present day, Pinker presents his case with voluminous erudition. Part of his argument consists in showing that the past was more violent than we tend to imagine. Tribal peoples that have been praised by anthropologists for their peaceful ways, such as the Kalahari! Not only have violent deaths declined in number. Barbaric practices such as human sacrifice and execution by torture have been abolished, while cruelty towards women, children and animals is, Pinker claims, in steady decline. Other causes of the decline in violence include the invention of printing, the empowerment of women, enhanced powers of reasoning and expanding capacities for empathy in modern populations, and the growing influence of Enlightenment ideals. Pinker was not the first to promote this new orthodoxy. The Obsolescence of Major War that the institution of war was disappearing, with the civil wars of recent times being more like conflicts among criminal gangs. Pinker convincingly demonstrates that there has been a dramatic decline in violence, and he is persuasive about the causes of that decline. Among the causes of the outbreak of altruism, Pinker and Singer attach particular importance to the ascendancy of Enlightenment thinking. Reviewing Pinker, Singer writes: People began to look askance at forms of violence that had previously been taken for granted: But these values were not as unambiguously benign as is nowadays commonly supposed. None of these views is discussed by Singer or Pinker. How could a philosophy of reason and toleration be implicated in mass murder? Such links between Enlightenment thinking and 20th-century barbarism are, for Pinker, merely aberrations, distortions of a pristine teaching that is innocent of any crime:

*The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* is a book by Steven Pinker, in which the author argues that violence in the world has declined both in the long run and in the short run and suggests explanations as to why this has occurred.

Conversion of forests to croplands and wetlands to shrimp farms has fed a human population that has more than doubled since the 1950s, but at a devastating cost to other species – such as pollinating insects and oxygen-producing plants – on which our climate, economy and well-being depend. The Amazon rainforest is still mostly intact, but it is rapidly diminishing and degrading along with an even faster disappearing cerrado tropical savannah. We need to decouple economic growth from degradation of nature. We need to measure wealth beyond economic indicators. GDP only goes so far. By 2050, they believe climate change could replace land-conversion as the main driver of extinction. In many regions, the report says current biodiversity trends are jeopardising UN global development goals to provide food, water, clothing and housing. They also weaken natural defences against extreme weather events, which will become more common due to climate change. Although the number of conservation areas has increased, most governments are failing to achieve the biodiversity targets set at the UN conference in Aichi, Japan. The authors urged an end to subsidies for agriculture and energy that are encouraging unsustainable production. Watson also urged people to switch to a more sustainable diet less beef, more chicken and vegetables and to waste less food, water and energy. There are glimmers of hope. But this was from a very low base and with far fewer species than in the past. In Africa, there has been a partial recovery of some species, though there is still a long way to go. Watson – a former chair of the IPCC and a leading figure in the largely successful campaign to reduce the gases that were causing a hole in the ozone layer – said the biodiversity report was the most comprehensive since 1992 and the first of its type that involved not just scientists, but governments and other stakeholders. Despite the grim outlook, he said there was cause for hope. The report outlines several different future paths, depending on the policies adopted by governments and the choices made by consumers. None completely halt biodiversity loss, but the worst-case scenarios can be avoided with greater conservation efforts. The missing link is to involve policymakers across government and to accept that biodiversity affects every area of the economy. Currently, these concerns are widely accepted by foreign and environment ministries; the challenge is to move the debate to incorporate this in other areas of government, such as agriculture, energy and water. Businesses and individual consumers also need to play a more responsible role, said Watson. Signatories to the Convention for Biodiversity will meet in Sharm El-Sheikh in November to discuss ways to raise targets and strengthen compliance. But there have been more than 100 scientific reports since 1992, almost all of which have warned of deterioration of the climate or natural world. Without more pressure from civil society, media and voters, governments have been reluctant to sacrifice short-term economic goals to meet the longer-term environmental challenge to human wellbeing. Others have put the crisis in starker terms.

**Chapter 9 : Nature in steep decline due to human activities: WWF Living Planet Report | Newslines**

*This is mainly due to the reported decline of values of nature's contributions by the people in that area. Apart from that, the biggest threat to biodiversity is the increasing variety and abundance of invasive alien species.*

Pinker uses the phrase as a metaphor for four human motivations – empathy, self-control, the "moral sense," and reason – that, he writes, can "orient us away from violence and towards cooperation and altruism. The decline in violence, he argues, is enormous in magnitude, visible on both long and short time scales, and found in many domains, including military conflict, homicide, genocide, torture, criminal justice, and treatment of children, homosexuals, animals and racial and ethnic minorities. He stresses that "The decline, to be sure, has not been smooth; it has not brought violence down to zero; and it is not guaranteed to continue. He specifically rejects the view that humans are necessarily violent, and thus have to undergo radical change in order to become more peaceable. However, Pinker also rejects what he regards as the simplistic nature versus nurture argument, which would imply that the radical change must therefore have come purely from external "nurture" sources. The Leviathan – the rise of the modern nation-state and judiciary "with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force," which "can defuse the [individual] temptation of exploitative attack, inhibit the impulse for revenge, and circumvent Chapter 8 discusses five "inner demons" - psychological systems that can lead to violence. Chapter 9 examines four "better angels" or motives that can incline people away from violence. The last chapter examines the five historical forces listed above that have led to declines in violence. Six trends of declining violence Chapters 2 through 7 [ edit ] The Pacification Process: Pinker describes this as the transition from "the anarchy of hunting, gathering, and horticultural societies Pinker argues that "between the late Middle Ages and the 20th century, European countries saw a tenfold-to-fiftyfold decline in their rates of homicide. He says this revolution "unfolded on the [shorter] scale of centuries and took off around the time of the Age of Reason and the European Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. Inquiries into the history of the Cold War. Pinker calls this trend "more tenuous," but "since the end of the Cold War in , organized conflicts of all kinds - civil wars, genocides, repression by autocratic governments, and terrorist attacks - have declined throughout the world. The postwar period has seen, Pinker argues, "a growing revulsion against aggression on smaller scales, including violence against ethnic minorities, women, children, homosexuals, and animals. Nothing could be further from contemporary scientific understanding of the psychology of violence. It is the output of several psychological systems that differ in their environmental triggers, their internal logic, their neurological basis, and their social distribution. Predatory or Practical Violence: Influences[ edit ] Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the book Pinker uses a range of sources from different fields. Particular attention is paid to philosopher Thomas Hobbes who Pinker argues has been undervalued. In an earlier work Pinker characterized the general misunderstanding concerning Hobbes: Hobbes is commonly interpreted as proposing that man in a state of nature was saddled with an irrational impulse for hatred and destruction. In fact his analysis is more subtle, and perhaps even more tragic for he showed how the dynamics of violence fall out of interactions among rational and self-interested agents. To have command of so much research, spread across so many different fields, is a masterly achievement. Pinker convincingly demonstrates that there has been a dramatic decline in violence, and he is persuasive about the causes of that decline. The trends are not subtle – many of the changes involve an order of magnitude or more. Even when his explanations do not fully convince, they are serious and well-grounded. But Pinker shows that for most people in most ways it has become much less dangerous. Wilson , in the Wall Street Journal , called the book "a masterly effort to explain what Mr. Pinker regards as one of the biggest changes in human history: We kill one another less frequently than before. But to give this project its greatest possible effect, he has one more book to write: Pinker has not done careful research. While there are a few mixed reviews James Q. Wilson in the Wall Street Journal comes to mind , virtually everyone else either raves about the book or expresses something close to ad hominem contempt and loathing At the heart of the disagreement are competing conceptions of research and scholarship, perhaps epistemology itself. How are we to study violence and to assess whether it has been increasing or decreasing? What analytic tools do we bring to the table? Pinker, sensibly enough

chooses to look at the best available evidence regarding the rate of violent death over time, in pre-state societies, in medieval Europe, in the modern era, and always in a global context; he writes about inter-state conflicts, the two world wars, intrastate conflicts, civil wars, and homicides. In doing so, he takes a critical barometer of violence to be the rate of homicide deaths per , citizens Whatever agreements or disagreements may spring from his specifics, the author deserves our respect, gratitude, and applause. Epstein also accuses Pinker of an over-reliance on historical data, and argues that he has fallen prey to confirmation bias , leading him to focus on evidence that supports his thesis while ignoring research that does not. In the end, what Pinker calls a "decline of violence" in modernity actually has been, in real body counts, a continual and extravagant increase in violence that has been outstripped by an even more exorbitant demographic explosion. Well, not to put too fine a point on it: What on earth can he truly imagine that tells us about "progress" or "Enlightenment" or about the past, the present, or the future? By all means, praise the modern world for what is good about it, but spare us the mythology. It is a futureâ€”mostly relieved of discord, and freed from an oppressive Godâ€”that some would regard as heaven on earth. He is not the first and certainly not the last to entertain hopes disappointed so resolutely by the history of actual human beings. Herman of the University of Pennsylvania, together with independent journalist David Peterson, wrote detailed negative reviews of the book for the International Socialist Review [35] and for The Public Intellectuals Project, concluding it "is a terrible book, both as a technical work of scholarship and as a moral tract and guide. But it is extremely well-attuned to the demands of U. Have we in fact become even more violent over time? Ditto for underpaying workers, undermining cultural traditions, polluting the ecosystem, and other practices that moralists want to stigmatize by metaphorically extending the term violence to them. The problem with the conclusions reached in these studies is their reliance on "battle death" statistics. The pattern of the past centuryâ€”one recurring in historyâ€”is that the deaths of noncombatants due to war has risen, steadily and very dramatically. In World War I, perhaps only 10 percent of the 10 million-plus who died were civilians. The number of noncombatant deaths jumped to as much as 50 percent of the 50 million-plus lives lost in World War II, and the sad toll has kept on rising ever since". Wars can be expected to kill larger percentages of smaller populations. As the population grows, fewer warriors are needed, proportionally. Science is not about making claims about a sample, but using a sample to make general claims and discuss properties that apply outside the sample. They propose an alternative methodology to look at violence in particular, and other aspects of quantitative historiography in general in a way compatible with statistical inference, which needs to accommodate the fat-tailedness of the data and the unreliability of the reports of conflicts. The problems that come up time and again are: