

Protective Destroyers

Are we today more destroyers or protectors of our environment? As our impact on the environment becomes clear, the answer to this question starts to become relevant. However, I think today the answer is more complicated than being either more of a “destroyer” versus “protector.” I believe we are becoming more of both.

As we continuously advance and innovate our technology, we are becoming more destructive and abusive to our environment. If we take a look at the past, we can see evidence of humanity’s need for convenience, even if it means harming the world around us. One example from history is the Industrial Revolution, which was a pinnacle of innovation that occurred from 1760 to 1840. According to an article on history.com, *“Along with amazing technological advances, the Industrial Revolution of the mid-19th century introduced new sources of air and water pollution.”* This period introduced new mechanized processes that were far quicker and efficient, but led to the pollution of our environment. Since then, humanity has had a reliance on these fast processes, despite its effects on the environment. As more countries become more industrialized today, our global impact on the environment worsens. Industrialization and innovation overtime can come at the cost of becoming more of a destroyer today.

Yet even though some of our innovations are harming our environment, others can be used in a positive way to protect our environment. Our technology allows us to measure or predict our damage, and attempt to fix it in time. With social media as a fast way to share information, we can easily educate ourselves about our environment and share ideas that can help save it. Our innovations allow our voices to be quickly shared all over the world. Also, we can innovate ways to make our technology without negatively affecting our environment, such as creating reusable and sustainable products or learning how to harness renewable energy sources. Our innovations allow us to be more of a protector of our planet.

Today we have increased in both destroying our environment and protecting our environment. I believe the two are related and are proportionate to each other, rather than one being more than the other. Humanity responds to destruction by becoming more protective. When we see the consequences of our impact, it makes us respond in a protective way. A recent example of this occurred in the early 1980s, when scientists discovered that the ozone layer was thinning. According to a NASA observatory, *“the stratospheric ozone layer protects life on Earth by absorbing ultraviolet light, which damages DNA in plants and animals (including humans) and leads to sunburns and skin cancer.”* This crisis convinced us that our everyday chemicals, such as chlorofluorocarbon, can cause major harm to our environment. Our reaction to this discovery led to the 1987 Montreal Protocol, and the de-production of CFCs. Today, as stated by the UN’s environmental agency (UNEP), *“at the current momentum, scientists predict the planet’s protective shield of gas - or ozone layer as we know it - will be completely healed as far as some regions of the planet are concerned, by the 2030’s...”* As we became aware of our increase in destruction on the environment, we became more protective and attempted to change.

Although I see that we are becoming more destroyers, I also realize that with our destruction, we also become more protective. My hope for the future is that we not only become more protective than destructive, but also take initiative to prevent the destruction from happening at all. Let’s work together to become more proactive and save our planet!