



Why the West Has Won: Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam

Victor Davis Hanson

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This is a brilliant history of the rise to dominance of the West, exploring the links between cultural values and military success. Instead of weighing up the West through its cultural and literary accomplishments, Hanson engages with the much starker record of the Western battlefield. In place of The Great Books, he studies The Great Battles, and offers graphic representations of nine representative clashes between West and non-West. Hanson writes uncommonly well about battle, and has an uncanny ability to evoke the chaos and terror of warfare, so crystallising his argument into records of a few hours of intense combat. Hanson argues that the West has won not just because of technology and military might, but because of its focus on individualism, democratic political structures, and scientific rationalism. However this is no mere Eurocentric account of the steady millennia-long rise of Western power. Rather, it is an explanation of why the West finds itself now militarily unmatched, its values spreading around the globe - sometimes with devastating effects on local cultures which have at times adopted the worst of what European traditions have offered or imposed.

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