

Defending the West

Human Nature and the Need for Moral Order

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Introduction

I wrote this book out of my conviction that Western civilization as we know it is in serious trouble, not only from external and internal forces intent on tearing it down, but also from the angst I see all around me in people who seem to have lost their purpose in living.

The civilization we call the West did not rise by accident, nor was it geography, resources, or luck that produced the world we live in. It was in large part due to the moral traditions that were built and refined over millennia. It has been these traditions that have allowed liberty to flourish to the extent that it has, and it is the weakening of those traditions that threatens us today.

While the trappings of normality persist—institutions, elections, and markets—the traditions that once supported these institutions are fraying. Self-restraint, accountability, reverence for truth, faith in God, respect for law, and the primacy of the family—are all in retreat.

In this book, I argue for why I believe this is happening

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and what we need to do to stop the West's collapse before it becomes inevitable.

HOW THE BOOK IS STRUCTURED

I lay out my argument in four parts, each building on the last.

In **Part One**, I start with an examination of human nature and the instincts that have driven and enabled us to build the world we live in.

In **Part Two**, I argue that instinct alone cannot build a stable society. I show how Stoic philosophy and the Judeo-Christian moral framework provided the means for disciplining human impulses as civilization grew.

In **Part Three**, I examine the erosion of that discipline in our institutions and society, highlighting the most critical issues we face today.

Finally, in **Part Four**, I detail the practical measures we all can take—personally and in our families and institutions—to reverse these trends if we want to defend our way of life.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT — AND IS

This book is not an appeal to utopia. I do not argue that the history of the West has been flawless or incorruptible. War, injustice, hypocrisy, and corruption are recurring features of every human society. Our history is distinct not because it is flawless, but because it has repeatedly judged itself against enduring moral standards and made the corrections necessary to return to a moral path.

Nor am I calling for a violent revolt against the forces

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that conspire against us. If we are to win the battle to save the West, the work begins with each individual—what we can each do in our daily lives, and in our interactions with family, our community, and our institutions to rebuild our moral foundations.

What this book is, is a call to action for those who hear and see the cracks in the foundations of our society. With the arguments laid out in this book, I hope that you will not only gain a better understanding of what is driving this conflict, but also what you can do to help forestall it, both on your own and through the efforts of others you can hopefully engage to help in this fight.

Part One
The Naked Ape

“We were born of risen apes, not fallen angels.”

— Robert Ardrey, *African Genesis*

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The Social Primate

“Man is by nature a political animal.”

— Aristotle, *Politics*

We prefer to think of ourselves as rational and principled. We assume that our decisions are shaped by careful thought and moral reflection. Yet beneath modern institutions and technology, we remain highly intelligent primates whose survival once depended on understanding our place within a group.

Long before written laws or formal governments, human beings lived in small bands where status directly affected survival. Access to food, security, and mates depended on a person's position relative to others. What we now call politics began there, in the daily effort to maintain standing, avoid exclusion, and form alliances. Those who could read shifting loyalties and anticipate threats were more likely to survive and pass on their genes.

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Over many generations, those pressures shaped the human mind and biology.

We still carry that inheritance. Human beings remain highly sensitive to reputation, loyalty, dominance, and betrayal because those signals once carried serious consequences. In small ancestral groups, a damaged reputation could lead to isolation, and isolation from the group could be fatal. Although modern life rarely places us in that position, our reactions still reflect those earlier conditions. We care about who is rising, who is falling, and where we stand.

Research into primate behavior shows we are not unique in this regard. In *Chimpanzee Politics*, Frans de Waal describes how chimpanzee troops form dominance hierarchies in which leadership depends as much on alliances as on strength. An alpha male who alienates too many allies eventually faces coordinated opposition. Power shifts when coalitions shift. The setting may be a forest rather than a boardroom, but the structure is recognizable today. Corporate offices, political organizations, and religious institutions still display similar patterns of alliance, rank, and displacement.

Hierarchy tends to emerge wherever social animals gather because it reduces constant conflict. Once the relative positions are understood, individuals do not need to continually fight over them. Even communities that claim to reject hierarchy find that influence consolidates somewhere. In a workplace that emphasizes flat management, someone still makes final decisions. In a movement that rejects elites, certain individuals gain authority through visibility, funding, or personal appeal. Titles may change, but hierarchy remains.

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Anthropologist Christopher Boehm examined egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies in *Hierarchy in the Forest*. He found that the impulse toward dominance does not disappear in such groups. Instead, it is restrained through ridicule, gossip, and collective sanctions aimed at those who attempt to elevate themselves above others. What initially appears to be natural equality is in reality the result of deliberate social enforcement. Remove those constraints, and ambitious individuals quickly test the limits, which is why equality persists only when it is actively enforced.

Alongside hierarchy, another instinct shaped early human survival: the distinction between insiders and outsiders. Survival in our ancestors' world required trust within the group and caution regarding those beyond it. Misjudging an outsider's intentions could have fatal consequences. This tendency to divide the world into "us" and "them" is not a modern invention. It is a legacy from when inclusion or exclusion was a matter of life or death.

Today, those same instincts attach themselves to political affiliation, religious identity, nationality, and cultural trends. We continue to look for signals of allegiance and deviation from the groups we care about, and our institutions still rely on this instinct. Political campaigns frame elections as existential struggles because that language activates deep instincts about group survival. Religious movements reinforce solidarity through shared doctrine and narrative. Corporations cultivate brand identity to foster attachment among employees and customers. These strategies work because they align with our long-established instincts.

Status within groups has always shaped influence. In

small ancestral bands, it was tied to visible contribution—strength, skill, or courage. In modern societies, status is expressed through wealth, credentials, influence, and, increasingly, through public affirmations of our moral posture—what we now call virtue signaling. These declarations can raise or protect one’s standing within their social group.

Moral language, therefore, becomes a powerful instrument of rank. When a group defines what counts as virtuous behavior, it also defines who belongs. Labeling dissent as immoral can exclude opponents without directly addressing their arguments. This pattern appears across institutions.

Political movements reward those who adopt approved language and marginalize those who do not. Corporations and professional organizations adopt public moral positions that signal alignment with prevailing cultural standards. The context changes, but the underlying mechanism remains the same: status is pursued by aligning to what is considered the “right” position.

Recognizing these patterns is key to understanding human nature. Cooperation has always been as essential as competition. Families form because children require long-term care. Communities develop because shared effort produces stability. Institutions arise because large societies cannot function without formal structures. The same instincts that create rivalry also enable trust and coordination. The tension between cooperation and competition is a constant feature of social life.

Stable societies do not eliminate hierarchy or group loyalty. Instead, they channel these instincts through rules and customs. Markets convert rivalry into productive

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competition when contracts are enforced, and fraud is punished. Elections provide a structured process for ambition to be tested and for power to be transferred peacefully. Religious institutions attempt to restrain their leaders and members through doctrine and accountability. These guardrails do not eliminate human drives; they place boundaries around them.

At the same time, institutions are composed of individuals who still carry the same drives for rank, loyalty, and advantage. No political theory, religious doctrine, or economic system removes our ambitions. Any system or movement that assumes people will consistently act against self-interest without meaningful constraints is naive.

When we assume that human beings are primarily rational and selfless, institutional failure appears surprising. Once we recognize that the desire for status and dominance is a permanent part of our nature, corruption becomes easier to understand. Institutions weaken when the moral, social, and legal controls that restrain these instincts are neglected.

Civilization has not erased our primal nature. It has organized and contained it. Any serious analysis of society must begin with a clear understanding of what we are: reasoning beings, but still social primates shaped by hierarchy, loyalty, and the pursuit of status. Ignoring that reality makes it harder to understand what goes wrong when our institutions falter.

