


From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present

By Jacques Barzun

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Drawing on a lifetime of studies across a broad territory, highly regarded cultural historian and critic Jacques Barzun here synthesizes the sum of his discoveries and conclusions about the whole of Western culture since 1500. The triumphs and defeats of five hundred years form an inspiring saga which modifies the current impression of Western history as one long tale of oppression by white European males. Women and their deeds are prominent, and freedom (even in sexual matters) is not an invention of the last decades. And when Barzun rates the present not as a culmination of history, but as a decline, he is in no way a prophet of doom. Instead, he shows that decadence is the normal close to a great period, and a necessary condition of the creative novelty that will burst forth--tomorrow, or the next day.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jacques Barzun (1907-2012) was born in France and came to the United States in 1920. After graduating from Columbia College, he joined the faculty of the university, becoming Seth Low Professor of History and, for a decade, dean of faculties and provost. The author of some thirty books, he received the Gold Medal for Criticism from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, of which he was twice president.

Edward Lewis (a.k.a. David Hilder) is a stage, film, and television actor. He has narrated unabridged audiobooks for over eighteen years and has recorded more than two hundred titles, spanning works of fiction and nonfiction.

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