The Might of the West

by Revilo P. Oliver

LAWRENCE R. BROWN’s The Might of the West is one of the fundamental books of our century. It was published by Obolensky in 1963, just at the time at which that publishing house passed into the hands of new owners, who virtually suppressed the book. It has only now become generally available, thanks to the enlightened generosity of a young architectural designer in Wisconsin, who provided the money for a photo-offset reproduction of the original printing, necessarily but unfortunately including its rare typographical errors, a few deplorable misstatements, and a conjectural number of passages that the author would doubtless have wished to revise, since it is most unlikely that a vigorous mind would have learned nothing from study and meditation in seventeen years. These, however, are but minor blemishes in a great work, and we should be grateful for what has been given us.

Inquiry into the causes of the rise and fall of nations and civilizations is at least as old as Herodotus, but study of the problem in the form in which it presents itself so acutely and so urgently to us may be said to begin with Théodore Funck-Brentano’s La Civilisation et ses lois (1876), which was followed by such notable works as Brooks Adams’ The Law of Civilization and Decay (1896) and Correa Moylan Walsh’s The Climax of Civilisation (1917). All earlier works, however, were so eclipsed by Oswald Spengler’s magisterial and celebrated Untergang des Abendlandes (1918–22) that all subsequent writing on the subject must be defined by reference to Spengler, although the course of history since 1922 has shown that he failed to take into account some forces that have powerfully distorted the development of our civilization, if not of others.

Although Mr. Brown’s purpose is to illuminate the true nature and vital force of our culture rather than to formulate general laws of historical change, he follows Spengler in regarding our Western civilization as unique and discrete, having no organic relation to any other civilization: it began around 900 and has brought us to our catastrophic present. He has dropped, however, Spengler’s conception of a civilization as a quasi-biological organism with a fixed life-span, whence it follows that the West is now senile and, like an old man, has no future but the ineluctable decay of vitality that precedes an unescapable death. In this respect, therefore, Mr. Brown’s philosophy, as he formulated it in 1963, is basically optimistic: Far from being doomed by some inherent or external destiny, we of the West, if only we come to our senses and understand who we really are, may be just beginning the great age of our civilization.

Like Spengler, Mr. Brown identifies the Egyptian, Babylonian, Hindu, and Chinese civilizations as discrete from our own. He concisely surveys their political development and their accomplishments in mechanics, architecture, and the arts, with the notable exception of literature, for which he evidently feels indifference, if not disdain. He also recognizes Spengler’s “Magian” culture but uses the term ‘Levantine’ to designate it, devoting special attention to its dominant superstitions and the mentality that produced them. These other cultures, and even the Classical, are described for purposes of contrast, for Mr. Brown, who doubts the possibility of establishing an historical causality, writes to enable us “to discover our lost identity.”

He makes a strong case—stronger, I should say, than Spengler’s—for the independence of European civilization, and he is eminently right in making the principal criterion the great technology and the scientific method that are the true glory and the unique creation of our culture.

Our civilization, on his showing, was born in the time of Charlemagne, and it went through the process that Spengler calls pseudo-morphosis, by which a young people, emerging from barbarism, takes over some of the outward forms and the learning of a more advanced civilization. We took over very little from the Classical and much from the Levantine world, which was represented by both Byzantium and Islam. But we failed—at the time and ever since—to eliminate the alien elements after they had served their purpose, and that is why it has been the West’s dolorous fate to be “a society whose inward convictions have been at hopeless variance with its outward professions.”

Mr. Brown proves that the characteristic tendency of our dominant mentality appears in Anselm; he rightly emphasizes the great intellectual activity of the Scholastics; and his disquisition on the emergence of real scientific inquiry among them will astonish, I dare say, all but the very few of our contemporaries who take the trouble to read the most uninviting of all the uninviting texts in Mediaeval Latin.

European civilization was developing the great power for which its unique mentality destined it, and it was gradually expelling the alien elements it had absorbed at its origin, when its progress was checked by a disastrous recrudescence of those alien elements, which thus came to dominate and pervert it for centuries. The two fatal poisons were Christianity and Humanism, which Mr. Brown regards as concurrent and complementary infections of the mass mind, and not as essentially antithetical forces. He accordingly sees “the Renaissance and the Reformation as two manifestations of the same retreat from the exacting moral and intellectual responsibilities of Western civilization.”

Of the two forces of pseudo-morphosis thus identified, one is obvious, but the other will startle most of our educated contemporaries. Both require some consideration, since the thesis of The Might of West depends upon them.

Mr. Brown has the courage to state explicitly an indubitable fact that most historians timidly evade or leave to be inferred from hints and ambiguities, lest they expose themselves to fanatical reprisals. In the decaying Roman Empire, Christianity was devised by the Jews who had long before infiltrated all the prosperous parts of it to exploit the inhabitants. Most of those Jews, as is common in Jewish colonies, knew only one language, the one required by their business. They spoke and read the Greek koine, which was the language of international commerce and industry at that time, known throughout the Roman Empire and in a large part of Asia outside its boundaries. The koine, furthermore, was the only language generally known throughout the populous regions of the Empire that lay east of Italy; and in some of the larger cities of the west it was the language habitually spoken by large sections of the lower classes. Where Latin was the language of the common people or useful for penetrating higher circles, Jews naturally learned Latin, and it may be that where Latin was the common tongue, low-grade Jews, engaged in petty retail trade, knew only Latin, but the Greek koine, not any Semitic dialect, was the language of the international Jews.

These enterprising Jews knew their own pseudo-historical myths only in the text of the Septuagint, which, finally assembled early in the first century B.C., is the oldest form of the so-called Old Testament and does not show the excisions and revisions made in the much later text in Hebrew and Aramaic that Christians now strangely consider more “authoritative.” And the Jewish merchants, slave-dealers, and financiers in the great cities of the Empire can have had little interest in, and perhaps little knowledge of, the numerous goëtae who agitated the squalid peasants of Palestine with their futile claims to be christs.

What the prosperous and superficially civilized Jews of the Empire may have privately believed cannot, of course, be ascertained: it is likely that they differed among themselves and changed their opinions over the years. They must have seen the obvious profit to be derived from peddling a religion that emphasized their great racial superiority as the Chosen People while enabling them to convert and control a large population that would have refused to submit to the barbarous sexual mutilation and absurd taboos enjoined by “orthodox” Judaism. The new cult, ostensibly based on a special message from Yahweh transmitted through a christ in a remote and little-known region of the Empire, was an ideal instrument of proselytism: it appealed to the malice and resentments of the mongrel proletariat, while enjoining on them conduct that inhibited resentment of the Jews’ commercial practices. And it served as a cover for Bolshevik agitation that could not be identified as exclusively Jewish and would keep the consciousness of the masses permanently focused on exciting illusions and fanatical controversies.

This explains what would be otherwise mysterious. When one Christian sect prudently modified its revolutionary activity sufficiently to convince despots that it could be a useful support of their power, their first concern was to extirpate the large and, it seems, politically passive Christian sects that rejected the Jewish Septuagint. As Mr. Brown observes, the largest of these sects, the Marcionists, were the really “gentile” Christians, and their suppression would be a paradox, if one believed that the so-called New Testament, which was put together to provide an “authority” for denouncing them, had actually been intended to show a new dispensation by an omniscient god who had changed his mind about his former pets. And this explains why it was only later, after the “orthodox” sect had acquired governmental power, that the Christian mobs, described, e.g., by Libanius, surged through the predominantly Greek cities of the Empire, pillaging and looting the property of their betters and murdering “pagans.” The non-Jewish Christian sects had to be disposed of first.

Mr. Brown devotes a large section of his book to his reconstruction of the obscure history of early Christianity, but we need not follow him through that dismal swamp of fiction, forgery, and fraud. It was the “orthodox” version which, with slight variations, was imposed on the Germanic tribes who took over the European parts of the dying Empire. In their ignorance, they believed the Bible to be an historical record of events that had actually taken place at specified times in known parts of the world, and they therefore accepted it as proof of the intentions and power of a god to whose will and caprices men had to conform, however immoral or unreasonable the divine edicts might appear to mortals.

The Might of the West gives us the clearest and most cogent summary I have seen of the intellectual development of our civilization in the Middle Ages. As seeds sprout beneath a layer of fertilizing compost and send their shoots up through it, so the native rationality of our race grew up through the protective mantle of its religion. The Scholastics labored to make the cult logically intelligible, and at the same time they virtually founded modern mathematics. The better minds saw through the veil of Christian ignorance and rediscovered such fundamental facts of the real world as the sphericity of the earth. Technology, the source of our unique power, began more and more to harness the forces of nature by, for example, building windmills and watermills, breeding sturdy draft horses, inventing an efficient harness for them, and so nicely computing stresses that the audaciously soaring architecture of the Gothic became possible. The feudal rulers, furthermore, gave formal assent to the religion, but conducted their affairs with worldly prudence, while good society insisted on standards of personal honor, honesty, valor, and chivalry for which there was no sanction in the supposed revelations of their deity. Christianity was being gradually but surely civilized.

Our contemporaries generally accept as a truism the view that men’s minds were fettered by superstitions about the supernatural until they were emancipated by the Humanism of the Renaissance, but thoughtful students will at least admit that the proposition is open to doubt. Egon Friedell may not greatly exaggerate when, in the first volume of his Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit, he claims that Nominalism, which was the final and greatest triumph of the Scholastics and antedated even the earliest symptoms of the Renaissance, was more decisive in its effect on our history than the invention of gunpowder or of printing. Nominalism illuminated the impassable gulf between our racially instinctive standards of morality and the tales in the Bible. It did not question the historicity of those stories or expressly repudiate the religion, but it did make it incontestable that the god who was an accomplice of the Jews when they swindled the Egyptians and stole their property obviously offended our concept of justice. The only escape from that dilemma was to regard as just whatever that capricious and ferocious god did, however repugnant his conduct was to us. Could the Catholic unity of Christendom have been indefinitely preserved after that demonstration?

Mr. Brown does not ignore that question, although he does not press the point as far as he might in support of his contention that Humanism was a bane, rather than a benefit, to our civilization. He admits that “It is, of course, a fair question whether the Western Catholic Church could ever have been Westernized sufficiently to keep within it scientific thought and still retain enough of the sacred tradition to be considered Christian.” The crux here lies, perhaps, in the fact that Nominalists invariably affirm their unquestioning belief in the prevailing religion. When such affirmations are made in the Renaissance by such highly intelligent men as Laurentius Valla or Pomponatius, we naturally scent protective hypocrisy, although they may have sincerely been unwilling to disturb the social order, and would have made the same asseverations, had they been able to do so with impunity. We do not like to think of Mediaeval men in the same terms, and when we do, we must remain undecided. The great Nominalists were all ecclesiastics, and we can never know whether William of Occam, for example, was personally so devout that he never questioned his faith or had an understandable desire not to be incinerated—or an equally understandable desire to continue untroubled enjoyment of his sacred perquisites—or had a prudent prevision of the catastrophes that afflicted Europe when the empire of the Church and the unity of Christendom was shattered. The important point, perhaps, is that if there was scepticism or disbelief, it was not expressed in any form that could agitate the masses.

To any unprejudiced mind, the Protestant Reformation was a catastrophe. Europe was fragmented by irreconcilable hatreds which endure to the present day. Endless and almost innumerable wars were waged, not rationally for political or economic ends, but insanely to enforce obscure and paradoxical doctrines that the various Christian sects today have discarded as nugatory or illusory. For more than two centuries, the best blood of Europe continually drenched battlefields and washed city streets as men, inflamed with pious blood-lust, butchered their kinsmen in frantic efforts to deliver their omnipotent god from the clutches of the Antichrist. The genetic loss, which fell heaviest upon the northern countries, was great beyond calculation. Historians estimate that in just one of the many Wars of Religion, two-thirds of the population of Germany perished; and while that is an extreme example of the power of Faith, no country in Europe failed to sacrifice a part of its population to please Yahweh.

The intellectual and moral disasters matched the genetic. For more than two centuries, most of the intellectual energies of Europe, which could have been devoted to science and useful scholarship, were diverted from the tasks of civilization and squandered on interminable argumentation about holy ghosts, goblins, and witches. In their efforts to solve God’s puzzles, the clergy on both sides had to learn God’s own language, Hebrew, and cognate dialects; and Jewish influence became ascendent, sometimes paramount, through both the Old Testament and the theosophical rodomontade of the Kabbalah. And on the Protestant side, the fragmentation continued until any crack-brained tailor, disgruntled wife, or clever con man could have a revelation of what the Scriptural conundrums really meant and set up in business as an heresiarch.

During the Middle Ages, it is true, there were some outbreaks of religious hysteria, but the Church kept them under control. With the Reformation, the brain fever became epidemic. What was novel about it was that Biblical texts were used to incite revolutionary agitation among the masses, and civil wars. Whether or not the initiators foresaw the consequences of their arson, the blaze, once kindled, became a conflagration that swept over all Europe and mentally stultified it for centuries and even to the present day, especially now in such basically Christian heresies as Marxism and “Liberalism,” which claim to be atheistic but obviously must believe in the Devil, whose malevolent disciples, particularly “Fascists” and “racists,” they righteously long to exterminate.

What is startling about this book is the identification of Humanism as another deadly pseudo-morphosis. The usual view is that the Renaissance was an antidote to Christianity, and some scholars, such as Émile Callot, not only recognize the Reformation as (I translate) “a violent regression to the Middle Ages, by which the limpid stream of ancient wisdom would be contaminated for two centuries,” but argue that, strictly speaking, the Reformation was the effective end of the Renaissance. Mr. Brown sees matters quite differently. For him, the Renaissance was a second and simultaneous disaster. It was a pseudo-morphosis, an attempt to revive the Classical civilization, which had no legitimate connection with ours, thus imposing a pernicious illusion that long distorted our culture and, like the Reformation, prevented us from becoming aware of our true identity. He has thus neatly offended both the credulous and the educated among our contemporaries.

I shall not attempt to refute Mr. Brown. I can understand and sympathize with his position. It is quite true that the supreme question of elegance in Latin style, the Humanists’ absolute criterion, was not only a potent weapon against the churchmen, but also obfuscated intellectual issues. That tendency was inherent in the movement from the first. After the Reformation set Europe ablaze, we naturally make great allowances for scholars deficient in philoparaptesism (as they sardonically termed a willingness to be roasted for the glory of God), and we wonder what was inwardly believed by men who outwardly conformed to the official cult of the region in which they lived and even found gainful employment in employing their learning in its service. Before that catastrophe, however, there is less uncertainty. We are saddened, for example, when we see Petrarch, who is generally accounted the first of the Humanists, in violent controversy with the Averroists, who represented in their way the rational tendency of our civilization, because their Latin was barbarous, and it is with compassion that we see him dote on the ravings of Augustine and also carry our instinctive veneration for womanhood to the point of a mystical and more than romantic gynaeolatry. When we read Attilio Nulli’s study of Erasmus, we agree that the great scholar ought not to have been a Christian, even while we have to admit that the evidence shows that he, however inconsistently, probably had a genuine faith in doctrines taken from the New Testament, even though he deplored the irreversible error that had saddled the Church with such embarrassing and compromising baggage as the Old. And we are saddened to see him launch diatribes against his fellow scholars who used the literary convention of a strict Ciceronianism as a mask for their own irreligion—as, indeed, some scholarly churchmen continued to do until the middle of the Eighteenth Century.

It is true that, as R. R. Bolgar has said and Mr. Brown would not deny, the Humanists and their disciples turned to the great classics of Graeco-Roman antiquity not only as masters of literature but “above all as masters in the art of living,” and they saw in the society of the great ages of Greece and Rome a model to be imitated, so far as possible, in the modern world. One consequence of this, which may be cardinal in Mr. Brown’s thinking, will be noticed below.

Whether or not Mr. Brown is right, it must be observed that he writes with a polemic animus against Graeco-Roman culture, often underestimates or misrepresents the facts, and is sometimes led by his polemical ardor into ludicrous statements, of which the very worst is to be found in his comparison of the Hindu and Classical cultures on page 121. Mr. Brown knows very well that the Parthenon is not built of wood; that Athens was a thalassocracy and that Rome was a great naval power after 260 B.C.; that the poems of Homer were not first written down in the time of Marcus Aurelius; that the Greek alphabet was in use nine centuries before that time; and that Greek was written (in a syllabic script) and records kept as early as the thirteenth century B.C. Mr. Brown knew all that, of course, but his temper momentarily got the better of him, and a judicious reader, even if not charitable, will overlook this and other lapses, which are really irrelevant to the main argument.

Mr. Brown’s disparagement of the Classical civilization and his certainty that it was foreign to our own are based on its failure to develop a comparable technology. He was, perhaps, less than generous when he failed to mention that the epistemology of the New Academy, known to everyone through Cicero’s Academica, is precisely what is taken for granted in the methodology of modern science, but the problem is a real one, and I do not profess to know the answer. We should not try to evade it by observing that modern respect for ancient technology has greatly increased since the discovery of a machine, hyperbolically called a computer, for astronomical calculations, nor should we speculate about the possible prevalence in ancient society of the sentiment that led Vespasian to reject labor-saving machinery because it would deprive workmen of a livelihood. (See Suetonius, Vesp. 18.) There is no escaping the fact that the Greeks and Romans never had steamships, railways, or cannon. But our author could profit, I think, from reconsideration of some points in his argument.

He mentions, for example, the development of cannon. As everyone knows (and has recently been demonstrated by such developments as radar, atomic fusion, and guided missiles) the necessities of war are the mother of invention, and the major technical advances are the direct or indirect results of military need. The need to cast bigger and better cannon created the metallurgical skill without which most subsequent machines of any kind, to say nothing of steamships and railways, would have been impossible. Now one reason why the modern world developed cannon and the ancient world did not may be the fact that the Western world had lost the art of constructing the great torsion-artillery of Hellenistic times, which was superior in both hitting power and rate of fire to any cannon that Europe was able to produce for two centuries after cannon were first introduced. (See Erwin Schramm, Die antiken Geschütze der Saalburg, Berlin, 1918; cf. E. W. Marsden, Greek and Roman Artillery, Oxford, 1969).

Is technology the sole criterion? And is there not a radical difference between Mr. Brown’s two instances of pseudo-morphosis? The religious one was injected into our culture at its very inception, was enforced by fear of a terrible god whose existence and power was not doubted, and became the basis of all social organization from the very first. If Humanism was also a pseudo-morphosis, it was spontaneously and voluntarily adopted by Europe when our civilization was, on Mr. Brown’s own showing, in a quite advanced stage. It corresponded to no political, social, or economic imperative; it was fostered by no organization or class in its own interest; and it so appealed to the minds of our race that it triumphed over the determined and vigorous opposition of a large part of the Christian clergy, who rightly foresaw in it a threat to their business. In fact, I learn from the Jewish Chronicle (London) that even today an active admiration of Classical culture is a “fight against the Judaeo-Christian tradition” and that something so horribly “anti-Semitic” ought to be suppressed as “Fascism.”

The Classical world of antiquity must have captivated the modern mind through some charm, beauty, or world-view inherent in its surviving literature. From the end of the Fifteenth Century to the beginning of the Twentieth, our civilization voluntarily so identified itself with the Graeco-Roman that it devoted the greater part of the youth of every educated man to the extremely difficult and even painful task of so mastering the modalities of Classical thought that he could think directly in Latin and Greek and thus compose both prose and verse in those languages in conformity with the purest models and the most exacting standards. For that vast expenditure of intellectual energy there is no analogy in recorded history. And if that was pseudo-morphosis, what accounts for so great, so spontaneous, and so continuous an hallucination? One, moreover, that, as Mr. Brown complains, probably did impede the progress of science, technology, and the prosperity they create, since Humanism did divert so much mental energy of superior minds into its own channels.

Why the West turned in admiration to Antiquity is clear, even if we follow Mr. Brown in refusing to see any significance in the fact that the Classical and the Western are the only two civilizations that were created by Aryans—and flourished so long as Aryans remained dominant in their own countries. Apart from the beauty of an unsurpassed literature, and apart from the historical realism that one learns from Thucydides and Tacitus, the modern world sought in the ancient a system of civil ethics and of political life. The great men of antiquity, as their lives are reported, for instance, in Plutarch’s biographies, obeyed standards of personal honor as well as prudence which we instinctively admire, although Christianity contemns them. Cicero, for example, was indeed admired for his eloquence, but no less for his vision of, and devotion to, the Republic. And, as Mr. Brown is well aware, it was the Graeco-Roman conception of a mixed constitution (Cicero, Polybius, Aristotle) that ultimately produced the American Constitution, which most of us regard as a noble effort, even though it failed.

And here at last we have come to the crux of the problem. When I first read Mr. Brown’s breath-taking assertion that the Greeks and Romans lacked “a sense of politics,” I thought that merely another slip of an impassioned pen. But I think he meant precisely what he said, although he refrained from developing his point. One of the characteristics that most sharply differentiate the Classical civilization from all others except our own is its idea that a highly civilized people is capable of self-government through elected officers. The Greeks and Romans, so long as they controlled their own countries, were devoted to democracy in the ancient sense of that word, that is to say, government of which the policies are determined by a limited body of responsible citizens, who must be free, economically as well as politically, and thus must necessarily be supported by a subject mass of slaves or the equivalent. (Needless to say, the current notion that every anthropoid is entitled to a vote to express his whims is a form of gibbering idiocy that was unknown in Antiquity.) All the political convulsions of Graeco-Roman history arose from either divisions within the limited body of citizens or disputes about the most expedient extension or contraction of the franchise. It is true that no ancient state ever succeeded in stabilizing a constitution by which the franchise was so nicely adjusted that it was large enough to avert rule by self-interested cabals and small enough to exclude the feckless and ignorant, but the principle that free and responsible citizens (to the exclusion of slaves, proletarians, and aliens) were sovereign was maintained even in the Roman Empire until the Romans were supplanted by the descendants of their former slaves and subjects, especially wily Levantines, to whose radically different minds the very concept of political freedom and personal self-respect was childish and repugnant.

Now if it be true that our people’s infatuation with systems of elected government sprang from an attempt to imitate the politics of a civilization whose literature we admire, then the Renaissance was, as Mr. Brown claims, a pseudo-morphosis, and practically all of our political theory since the Sixteenth Century was an alien importation that the West, through a gross misunderstanding of itself, permitted to pervert its own nature and to drive it to an endless series of calamities. The true form of Western government, therefore, must be found in a stable hierarchical system based on personal loyalties and status within a virtually closed society, preferably the feudal system at its best or an adaptation of the Mediaeval polity to present conditions. The proximate collapse of the ochlocracy to which Americans are now mindlessly devoted will lend cogency to that proposition.

Our conceptions of history have inescapable consequences, and the consequences of Lawrence Brown’s historical analysis will startle and dismay most of the readers of Instauration. The second thesis of The Might of the West will particularly distress everyone who has not been cowed into pretending that races do not exist and who hopes that there still is a residual instinct of self-preservation in a large part of our own race, for if the Renaissance was a vast pseudo-morphosis, we must recognize the utter folly of trying to imitate a dead and alien civilization in the mad hope that we can succeed where it so notoriously failed. We must therefore purge our minds of the very notion of majority rule and all that it implies. It is not enough to recognize the suicidal insanity that has now enslaved us to our parasites and eternal enemies, for it would be equally unnatural to vest power in a legitimate majority of responsible citizens. We must even discard aristocratic dreams of rule by a majority of a highly select minority. It is idle to inquire whether the American Constitution failed because the requirements of property that entitled men to vote were set too low, or because it did not prohibit the immigration of Jews and other unassimilable aliens. It is futile to speculate whether the principle of human freedom and republican government could have been saved, had the Confederacy defeated the fanatical invaders and vindicated its independence. It is absurd to consider, as some of our more intelligent contemporaries are now doing, the creation of a viable society by resurrecting the Servian constitution described in Cicero’s De republica, substituting for property criteria of measured intelligence or racial purity. The very concept of self-government is like the Ptolemaic astronomy, which could not be saved by positing more epicycles or modifying it, as did Tycho Brahe, to eliminate the more glaring discrepancies: it was the basic idea that the heavens revolved about the earth that had to be discarded.

If the Renaissance was a delusion, we are deluding ourselves so long as we tinker with the Graeco-Roman idea of self-government—fatally deluding ourselves about the nature of Western man. In our civilization, the natural and requisite government must not only be completely authoritarian, but must be one of which the inner structure and purposes are concealed from the majority by means of a religion or equivalent faith to which citizens and masses alike will give implicit and unquestioning obedience. Mr. Brown explicitly warns us that

We should not fool ourselves into supposing that the core and source of strength of Western civilization can ever win the conscious applause of the great bulk of Westerners. Unconsciously they live by and treasure the standards of their civilization, but the intellectual acknowledgment of these standards runs counter to so many demands of self-esteem and self-justification, of childish hopes and pathetic dreams that most men can never verbally make this acknowledgment even secretly to themselves.

It follows, therefore, that so long as our civilization endures, ours must necessarily be “an esoteric, not a popular society.” If the West is to be preserved from the death that now seems imminent, it must be brought again under the control of Western minds, who, whatever the outward professions they may deem it expedient to make, will recognize and foster, quietly and more or less secretly, the implacably objective science that has “created the unique greatness of our society.”

It will have been seen that the problem whether our civilization is in its fundamental nature linked to, or totally independent of, the Classical has immediate and drastic implications for us. I have sought to elucidate the question, not to answer it. I shall only add that although Mr. Brown admits that “a connection between biology and civilization is an obvious historical fact,” and although he perceives that the Levantine mentality is totally incompatible with, and inimical to, our own, he does not consider the possibly relevant fact that the Classical, like all the civilizations known to history, declined and perished with the deterioration, mongrelization, and supersession of the race that created it. (The biological facts have most recently been set forth by Elmer Pendell in Why Civilizations Self-Destruct, Howard Allen, 1977.) Whatever weight we accord to this fact, we may be confident, I think, that Mr. Brown understands that his own premises require racial homogeneity in at least the élite of the West, and that only a scientifically rigorous system of eugenics can produce men of the rare intellectual capacity and the rarer dedication that will make them both able and willing to bear the enormous burden of high civilization.

Every reader must decide for himself how much of Mr. Brown’s analysis he will accept, but in so doing he will have been forced to face the fact that “the greatest ethical problem of our lifetime is to keep our society alive.” The word ‘ethical’ is well-chosen, for there can be no morality higher than one which will deliver us from “the ruin we have fought two world wars to achieve.” That profound perception alone would suffice to make The Might of the West one of the great achievements of the Western mind.

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