

SPENGLER VIEWS THE MACHINE AGE¹

I.

SELDOM has a book, so massive and so erudite, caused such a widespread commotion as did Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*.² It appealed to a variety of tastes. The preacher of imminent and sensational doomsdays has not lost his attraction with the decline of the religious sanctions attributed to bygone apocalypics. But a scientific age demands a scientific eschatology, and this Spengler supplied. Popular science had promised only a long protracted cooling of the earth's crust, or, in moments of soaring imagination, the possibility of a collision with a comet or an invasion from Mars. It was too remote to be really scaring. The morbid eschatological appetite wants the world to go out, not with a fizzle, but with a bang, and the sooner the bang the better. Spengler promised something at once scientific, catastrophic, and fairly *soon*; though perhaps it was not generally realised that 'soon' on the lips of this juggler with milleniums might mean quite a number of centuries.

But the appearance of these volumes—they were first published in 1918—was also well timed to meet a more passing mood. In those days of disillusionment it was gratifying to read this comparative study of the rise and fall of civilisations, this deterministic conception of repeating historical cycles, with its assurances

¹ 'Der Mensch und die Technik. Beitrag zu einer Philosophie des Lebens.' Von Oswald Spengler. (C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, 1931.)

² Such was the title of the English translation of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. It is typical of the 'slow phlegmatic English temperament' at which Spengler scoffs. An *Untergang* is no 'decline,' but a fall, a ruin, a cataclasm.

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that the signs of the times pointed to a speedy downfall of our own discredited culture. It was particularly gratifying to defeated Germany. The decade of Churchill's *World Crisis* and Remarque's *All Quiet* was pleased with the generalised theory that it is not man that makes history, but history that makes man. The poets and the romancers of those days, with their gospel of despair and escape, were delighted with this erudite sanction to what the lamented *Enemy* called their 'Paleface inferiority-complex.' The philosopher, too, was given plenty to think about in this new 'time-philosophy,' with its idea of the 'World as History,' which affirmed the inadequacy of all the accepted categories and systems. And everyone found in the book a powerful dramatic appeal. With Spengler, scientific research and philosophical speculation seemed to revert to the mythology which, according to Aristotle, begot them. Spurning the abstract, the conceptual, the universal, Spengler concretises, personifies the forces which mould human history and strive for mastery in man. The conflict of ideas becomes a battle of giants. 'It is a German philosophy,' proclaimed the Foreword. It was also a German drama—masquerading as real life. That alone may account for the seventy or so editions which have been demanded. Historic humanity, fooled and finally crushed sublimely by inexorable Destiny, plays the hero of a theme beloved of German legend and tragedy.³ It is a *Götterdämmerung*—the destruction of Wagnerian gods in the flames of Walhalla. It is, more expressly, a *Faust*—the downfall of man through his pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

The hisses were even more impassioned than the applause. There was a storm of controversy in Ger-

³ Cf. André Levinson: *Oswald Spengler in Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, Nov. 21, 1931.

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many.⁴ In France, Henri Massis sounded the alarm and appealed to his countrymen's devotion to their heritage of Latin culture as well as to their dislike of the *sale Boche*.⁵ Wyndham Lewis, in no mild terms, tried to rouse England and America.⁶

After so much pother it is too bad of Dr. Spengler to tell us that he had over-estimated our intelligence, and that we simply did not understand his book at all. Yet that is what, after twelve years, he does say. 'With that work I discovered,' he now writes, 'that the majority of readers are not capable of retaining a comprehensive view over the entire mass of ideas. Consequently they get lost even in particular spheres familiar to them, and as to the rest they see it all askew or not at all, and so get a false picture both of what I said and of what I was talking about.' He is, however, undismayed, and announces that he is preparing another gigantic work; extending his researches into the obscure regions of prehistory and human origins.

But meanwhile he has given us *Der Mensch und die Technik*, a résumé of his thought in a limited, but still vast, field. Its ninety pages are of very live interest, for they present us with Spengler's conception of the place of the present 'crisis' in the entire history of mankind. They are, moreover, evidently intended to afford a more comprehensible introduction to the intricacies of his philosophy.

The topic is hackneyed—'Men and Machines.' The diagnosis of the ills of our Machine Age is hardly original. But the line of approach and the moral drawn

⁴ Cf. Manfred Schroeter: *Der Streit um Spengler*, published by Beck of Munich.

⁵ In *La Défense de l'Occident* (Plon, 1927). An English translation was published by Faber and Gwyer.

⁶ In his book *Time and Western Man*; and in his article in the *Enemy*.

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from it all are certainly novel and arresting, if only because they shed much light on the philosophy of *The Decline of the West*.

It is a mistake, thinks Spengler (and surely rightly), to isolate the problem of the machine. It is only the extreme form of the far wider problem of the relation of *all* technical activity to man's life, culture and civilisation. The problems of Cosmopolis were already suggested when our palaeolithic ancestors fashioned flints into tools and weapons. The devil in the dynamo lurked already in the potter's wheel.

In this field of the cultural implications of technique, Spengler claims to be a pioneer. Goethe, indeed, in the Second Part of *Faust*, had recognised and struggled with the problem. But nineteenth century romanticism and idealism rejected the problem of technical activity, forced upon its unwilling notice by the Industrial Revolution, as unworthy of its consideration: 'to name a great business man or engineer alongside with poets and thinkers was *lèse-majesté* against "true" culture.' This attitude lingers, Spengler finds, among the aesthetes and *littérateurs* of our day, 'who account the completion of a novel more important than the construction of an aeroplane engine.' But the standpoint of nineteenth century materialism and utilitarianism was even more deplorable and 'unreal.' It viewed the new machinery as a labour-saving device and as means to the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number.' And by 'greatest happiness' it understood the minimum of activity and the maximum of pleasure and amusement—a view very offensive to Spengler's Nietzscheanism. Spengler himself sets out to tackle the problem from the standpoint of the stern realism which, he considers, characterises our twentieth century.

Not in the folly of modern politicians, financiers or industrialists does Spengler seek the origins of the pre-

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sent 'crisis,' but in remote catastrophic events of pre-history. The first catastrophe (and truly catastrophic it was, for Spengler will have nothing to do with Darwinism⁷) was the appearance on this planet of Men. The very existence of entities so anomalous against the background of Nature sets the stage for tragedy. Man, asserts Spengler, is before all things carnivorous, a beast of prey. In human predacity he finds the first clue to the secret of human destiny and a first reason for the human tragedy. Man lives by the death of his rivals, by a bloody conquest of enemy Nature. This fundamental fact is not to be ignored with the idealists, nor to be regretted with Darwin and Schopenhauer. Spengler agrees with Nietzsche that man's existence is a warfare, and that his might, his conquests, his pride and hate, are the ennoblers, not the degraders, of his life. The 'Will to Power' is the key to history.

⁷ 'Eine langsame, phlegmatische Veränderung entspricht dem englischen Naturell, nicht der Natur.' But Spengler adds some more serious and damaging criticism. The Darwinian classification of animals on the principle of anatomical similarity is gratuitous and materialistic. They should be classified, not according to their bodies, but according to their 'souls' as manifested in their modes of life. And modes of life should be gradated, as every Thomist knows, according to degrees of independence and self-sufficiency. Spengler's paragraph on this subject is curiously reminiscent of *Contra Gentiles*, IV, xi. Thus viewed, man is very far removed from the ape. Anatomically, carnivorous man may resemble the nut-eating ape, but his profounder affinities are with lions, tigers and eagles. And against the evolutionist's assumption of an uninterrupted, gradual process he remarks that 'we should not be able to distinguish geological strata were they not brought about by *catastrophes* of unknown kind and origin; nor could we distinguish *kinds* of fossilised animals had they not *suddenly* appeared, and died out *unaltered*.' He adopts, apparently, the 'mutation theory' inaugurated by De Vries, and is forced to the conclusion that the origin of man was 'sudden . . . like a flash of lightning, an earthquake . . . epoch-making in the highest sense.'

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By *Technik* is to be understood the strategy of the beast of prey in its struggle for existence. It is by his *Technik* that man is differentiated so sharply from the beasts. Theirs is a *Gattungstechnik*. Each species has its own tactic determined by instinct; it is unalterable, invariable, mechanical. But the human *Technik* is individual, personal, conscious, free, chooseable, inevitable, improveable, learnable, alterable. Man, in a word, is creative; he is the creator of his own mode of warfare against Nature. His *Technik* is subject to reason and will. The human individual is something more than one member of a species; he is a *person*. That is his dignity, and a further source of his misery.

For his tragedy lies, not only in the fact that he is destined to wage a hopeless warfare with the weapons of creative art against the overwhelming might of Nature, but still more in the fact that the very method of his warfare, his *Technik*, involves his own destruction. A man is a personified paradox, an incarnate conflict of Nature and Art. For man is blessed with *hands*, and so surely as tools are made for hands, so hands are made for tools. Here Spengler sees the seeds of disaster. For tools demand a twofold office of hands; they require hands to fashion them and hands to wield them. Already, then, we find the origin of the division of men into two opposed classes—the makers and the users of tools. And because preoccupation with one human activity involves the atrophy of another, this primordial potentiality to a disintegration within the species was also a potentiality to a repression within the personality.

The next catastrophe took place about five thousand years before Christ. Hitherto the conflict with Nature had remained an unorganised guerilla warfare of isolated individuals. But now traces appear of *organised* agriculture, cattle-breeding, elementary quarrying and

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mining, building, transport. Now the potentiality to decomposition begins to become an actuality. Man had found his *tongue*. By speech orders are given to his fellows, and *co-operative* activity becomes feasible. Thus man lost the innocence of individual isolation and independence, and the noble beast of prey is on the way to becoming a member of society. It is the beginning of history and of civilisation. Communal enterprise begets the Community, the artificial grouping of tribes and nations. Two sorts of men become distinguished: the makers and the users of tools, masters and 'hands,' rulers and ruled. Life in community represses individual liberty. It is of the essence of civilisation that the individual life counts for nothing. The *I* and the *mine* vanish into negligibility before the preponderating exigencies of the *we* and the *our*. The mass of men become the slaves of the masters of *Technik*, who themselves are *servi servorum*. As technical perfection progresses, so the individual becomes more suppressed, history more speeded, Nature more vengeful, and man rushes more blindly and surely to destruction.

The thirteenth century marks the beginning of the last phase, which leads inevitably to our present miseries, to the downfall of the West, and, with it, the downfall of man. Then began to spread abroad the Faustian mentality properly so called. The unconscious apostate Faustus were pious and well-meaning religious—Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus and Petrus Peregrinus. They began experimental research. They thought thereby to serve the orthodox God, 'to see Him in His creatures,' but in reality they were hypnotised by the new and terrible ideal of the *perpetuum mobile*. With them the aim of human thought became the search for dynamic working-hypotheses instead of static, abstract truths. No longer is the creative intelligence satisfied with the conquest of Matter, it

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seeks the harnessing of Energy;⁸ no longer is it content with the conquest of this or that natural phenomenon, it yearns to subdue the totality of natural forces with which to build a world of its own. It is the apex of human ambition, of the Will to Power. It is the beginning of the Machine Age. Not without reason was it suspected of sorcery, heresy and diabolism.

So, to cut still shorter a synopsis of a very long story, we come to the twentieth century, to the modern mechanised Cosmopolis. We are nearing the calamitous End. It is the summit of human achievement, the supreme effort of man's rebellious Art against Nature, and therefore it is the close of human history. It is, says Spengler, the Fifth Act of the human tragedy, the slaying of man by his own artifice. Here humanity spends itself. There may be, he thinks, another straggling, less intense civilisation after us, but 'here the struggle between Nature and Mankind is brought practically to an end.'

Spengler is not really a mythologist. If he appears to personify the machine as the slayer of its creator, that is only the rhetoric of his method. Yet the myth of the Robot portrays a reality. The reality is that the technical experts, the inventors, makers and owners of the machines, do not foresee nor concern themselves with the consequences of their creation. That is inevitable. Their aim is a personal one—riches, renown, the Will to Power, the personal satisfaction which the beast of prey ever finds in conquest. But the unheeded consequences of the machine affect profoundly the whole race of men and the very landscape of the earth. By the pressing of a button are released millions of horse-power beside which the physical power of the human individual is helpless. The released

⁸ We are reminded how Goethe's Faust had sought to revise the 'In principio erat Verbum,' and muttered 'Im Anfang war die Kraft.'—*Faust*, Part I, l. 1233.

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energy does not spare human energy, but adds to it, if only because one invention or discovery is not so much the attainment of a goal as the revealer of countless other goals for human endeavour and ambition. The machine is our master. In our topsy-turvy world our technique is no longer an instrument at our service. On the contrary, civilised man must be born, must live, often die, in the service of his tools. The gulf which divides the master from the user of tools is become impassable. As the inventor and owner have no common interest with the masses who work his engines, so the masses have no understanding of the nature of the machine, its origins or its products. They lose the opportunity for the expression of personality, and become themselves mechanised. The noble beast of prey is crushed and become himself the cog of a machine.

It is the last act, says Spengler. But the plot is insoluble. It is disaster to let the machines go on. Yet the machine-culture waxes with ever-increasing intensity. It is no longer the monopoly of the Nordic Blond Beast. He is being overwhelmed and starved by the competition of the coloured races and Soviet Russia. We are faced with a crisis of over-production, the high standard of living which the former monopoly gave to the white worker disqualifies him to withstand outside competition, his superiority was finally discredited by the War. 'That is at the bottom of unemployment in the white-man's lands, and unemployment is no "crisis," but a catastrophe.'

Shall we, then, stop the machines, fly from them, smash them, or at least slow them down? That, thinks Spengler, would be equally calamitous, yet that too is happening.

The Faustian mentality begins to tire of its *Technik*. A weariness spreads abroad, a sort of pacifism in the war against Nature. People are looking to simpler, more 'natural' modes of life, they indulge in sport instead of technical research, they

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detest the great cities, they long to escape from the constraint of these soulless activities, from the slavery of the machine, from the pale, cold atmosphere of technical organisation. . . . Occultism and spiritism, Hindu philosophies, metaphysical broodings, whether of Christian or pagan complexion, spurned in the days of Darwin, raise their heads again. It is the mentality of the Rome of Augustus. Disgusted with life, men flee to more primitive lands, to vagabondage, to suicide. *There begins the flight of the born, gifted technicians from the machine.* Soon only second-class talent, stragglers of a great age, will be available.

Hesitation, flight, stoppage, that too is disastrous. Man is doomed so soon as he relents in his warfare. That was the lesson of *The Decline of the West*. 'History dooms the peoples to whom Truth is of more account than Deeds, or by whom Justice is held more essential than Might.' The impasse was inevitable sooner or later. The weapons by which man is bound to preserve and perfect himself are bound to turn upon and destroy him.

II.

Such are the main headings of the story of *Der Mensch und die Technik*. A little too neat and *simpliste*, beyond a doubt. But let it be said in justice that it necessarily loses much cogency and completeness in our attempt to abbreviate it. But if this is Spengler's diagnosis, what is his remedy? What is his 'contribution to a philosophy of life' promised in the sub-title?

There is no remedy. The Spenglerian metaphysic will not allow the possibility of a remedy. The Spenglerian ethic asserts only the futility of seeking or wishing for one. The contribution to a

⁹ *Untergang des Abendlandes*, Vol. II, p. 628. All our references to the *Decline of the West* are to the 64th-65th editions of Vol. I (1929) and to the 54th-55th editions of Vol. II (1930).

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philosophy of life is, apparently, contained in the concluding paragraphs of vapid moralising, which call us, in the name of a sanctionless 'Duty' and loyalty to our accursed 'Race,' to 'persevere at the lost stronghold, without hope, without deliverance, like that Roman soldier whose bones were found before a gate of Pompeii' The amoral *ducunt Fata volentem, nolentem trahunt*, which closed *The Decline of the West*, was at least more dignified than this.

But what is to be thought of this Spenglerian philosophy? Let it be said at the outset that we need have no *a priori* prejudice against Spengler's statement and arrangement of historic facts. More eloquent than all his rhetoric were those neat parallel tables in *The Decline of the West*, summarising the rise and fall of successive cultures with their repeated cycles of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Historians must be left to decide whether or not Spengler manipulated his facts to suit his theory. But it may well be that corresponding forces arise periodically in history in similar ways, initiate a similar series of reactions and counter-reactions, wax and wane under parallel influences. As Aquinas pointed out long ago,¹⁰ when discussing a not dissimilar philosophy, the fact that man is endowed with free-will does not contradict the fact that the majority of men very seldom make use of it. This is especially true when we are treating of history, of men in the mass. It is for this reason that mass-psychology approximates very much nearer to the Behaviourist ideal of an exact science than does individual psychology. And even when an individual refuses to follow the crowd, his assertion of independence is seldom powerful enough to change the general course of events.

¹⁰ *Summa Theologica*, I, cxv, 4.

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But Spengler was not satisfied with enunciating a historical 'law.' He claimed something even more than permanence for what was, at most, an illuminating working hypothesis. In *The Decline of the West* he enunciated his principle of historical recurrence as mathematically precise and inexorably necessary. Granted that he disclaimed absolute truth, 'divorced from blood and history,' on the ground that there is no such thing, he claimed nevertheless to have discovered 'a logic of history . . . a, so to say, metaphysical structure of historical humanity.'¹¹ It was 'a Morphology of World History.' So surely, it claimed, as the old 'space philosophy' of the 'World as Nature' was the study of the necessity of cause and effect, so this new 'time-philosophy' of the 'World as History' was the study of 'the necessity of Destiny.' Just as, in virtue of the infallibility of causality, *things in space* assume determined shapes and forms, so, in virtue of the infallibility of 'Destiny,' *events in time* assume determined recurrent patterns. Spengler, in short, is not satisfied with remarking that the 'bus follows the determinate grooves of the tram route, he calls the 'bus a tram. Had he confined himself to the less pretentious, but still startling, conclusions which his factual premises warrant, he might have been able to contribute a truly valuable 'philosophy of life' in our present perplexities. His researches into the origins of decay in parallel states of past civilisations might have been abundantly fruitful with lessons about how to save ourselves. His searching diagnosis of our ills might have been the prelude to a cure. We could have hailed him as a prophet and a saviour. But, as it is, his jeremiads are unrelieved with any message of salvation, and we have to content ourselves with platitudes about the Roman soldier at Pompeii. The

¹¹ *Untergang des Abendlandes*, Vol. I, p. 5.

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Schicksalsgedanke, the idea of 'Destiny,' has rendered his labours sterile.

Now this *Schicksalsgedanke* is the pivot of his philosophy. It is also its unknown quantity. Spengler does not really believe in the Fates with their spinning-wheels. He does not literally believe in a malevolent divinity who persists in playing repeatedly the same old tune on the cosmic musical-box until the spring breaks. What then does he mean, *literally*?

In *The Decline of the West* it was very difficult to discover. 'He who defines knows nothing of Destiny,' he said. But *Der Mensch und die Technik* seems to reveal that he has a very definite idea of it, and very stale and commonplace it is.

The Machine Age, it tells us, is bringing man to ruin. It is bound to. Do not ask whether this is the peculiar effect of the circumstances of our existing Machine Age, or is so bound up with machines as to be inevitable in any machine age. The distinction has no sense for Spengler.

But whence this ruin? From the conglomeration of bars, bolts, tubes, wheels and so on, we call a machine? Impossible. Whence then? Evidently from man, the creator of the machine.

So far we are prepared to agree. The machines are compassing our ruin because mechanical development has been allowed to progress automatically without moral control, without respect for the common weal of man, without regard to the nature of the machines themselves. But Spengler will tell us that such moral control is an unrealisable idealist dream. Ruin is inevitable because man is a 'noble beast.' The technicians are compelled to pursue the uncontrolled development of *Technik* because the Will to Power is irrepressible, and the beast will continue to be beastly so long as it can. Society will disrupt because the other beasts, and notably the proletariat, yearn to be

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equally beastly, which, under existing conditions, they cannot.

So we seem to come to this : history is determined because man, the stuff of history, is determined. And Spengler believes that man is determined because, in spite of his protests to the contrary, he has a very definite idea of human nature. There is no such thing, he told us, as mankind, as man as such ; there are only individual men as manifest in time. He derided the historians whose labours are vitiated by a pre-conceived ideology. Yet he himself has been hypnotised by the noble beauty of the Nietzschean idea of Man as Beast. 'From Nietzsche I learned the problem,' he told us. But it is Nietzsche who has made the problem insoluble.

The 'noble beast' idea is not false. It is worse ; it is a half-truth. The whole truth is contained in the classic definition of man as 'rational animal,' as a 'thinking beast.' According to the Spenglerian idea of man, reason is an accident, an excrescence, a curse. Intelligence, he has explained,¹² is civilised man's meagre substitute for the primitive rustic mother-wit and instinct which he has lost by his sophistication. So it comes about, in his view, that civilisation, society, cities, technique, machinery, all that is the product of the creative intelligence, are unnatural. He does not see that man is not the conflict, but the synthesis of Nature and Art, that it is natural for man to be artificial, that the elemental conflict of the flesh and the spirit is not the struggle of disintegrating forces, but the creative strife for the fuller accomplishment of a synthesis. He does not see what his master Goethe saw with such profound insight. Goethe turned the villain Faust of the primitive puritanic legend into some semblance of a hero. He expurgated the final

¹² *Untergang des Abendlandes*, Vol. II, p. 121.

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tears of repentance, and, before the curtain falls, Faust could review his past struggles with some satisfaction, and bid the passing moment stay its flight.

Zum Augenblicke dürft' ich sagen—
Verweile doch, du bist so schön!
Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen
Nicht in Aeonen untergehn¹³

Goethe's Faust is delivered finally from the clutches of Mephistopheles by the sheer mercy of God and the advocacy of the *Mater Gloriosa*. But Spengler's Nietzschean Faust is neither villain nor hero, a pawn of Destiny, without satisfaction or regret for the past, indifferent to the present, without hope or fear for the future.

We are not concerned to dispute the 'noble beast' idea. We only suggest that perhaps the Spenglerian philosophy is not the elusive, esoteric thing it claims to be. It begins to appear as a very familiar theory indeed. It has, *malgré lui*, very close affinities with the nineteenth century romanticism which exalted instinct at the expense of intellect, with the materialistic psychology which ignored the spiritual side of human nature, with the Marxian idea of the predominance of economics over politics,¹⁴ with the Freudian idea of the predominance of subconscious impulses over our conscious life. It appears, in fine, as that most popular and shallow of philosophies—an anti-ideological ideology.

¹³ *Faust*, Part II, Act 5.

¹⁴ Karl Heim, in his ingenious essay on *Die religiöse Bedeutung des Schicksalsgedankens*, shows that Spengler owes an unacknowledged debt to Hegel's philosophy of history. It seems, nevertheless, that it is rather the 'Hegel upside-down' of Marx that has influenced him. With Marx, Spengler has got rid of the 'evolution of the Idea,' no less that the continuity of history which both Hegel and Marx took for granted.

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In conclusion, we should note an inconsistency in Spengler's determinism. We have seen, on one hand, that he regards human destiny as unalterable, because the human will is the fixed lust for might and conquest. The Nietzschean *Wille zur Macht* has become a sort of Thomistic *voluntas ut natura*. Yet, on the other hand, we have seen that, in the realm of technique, man differs from other beasts by his power of choosing his methods and his means.

If we look closely, we shall find that Spengler's idea of man is bolstered up by a quasi-metaphysic; his view of history is supported by a view of reality. This view has been acutely criticised, in spite of some excesses, by Wyndham Lewis. But we thought that Wyndham Lewis exaggerated unfairly when he described Spengler's *Weltanschauung* as 'nothing but a rising and falling of peoples and cultures on a dead level as regards value'; his metaphysic as 'the fatalism of that fixed stare, of *what is, is.*' But here, in *Der Mensch und die Technik*, we have it almost in so many words. The enlightened twentieth century realism, Spengler explains, refuses to father the thought by the wish. 'Instead of the *so shall it be* or *so should it be*, comes the inexorable *so is it* and *so will it be.*' Value, in a word, is unreal and unrealisable. Man can choose his materials and his tools when he *makes* things; he is powerless to pursue an ideal when he *does* things. This venturesome philosopher, who presumes to argue '*it must be*' from *it is,*' dismisses *should* and *can* from his vocabulary. So his philosophy of life urges us to a policy of non-resistance to an ignoble death, and the Will to Power becomes a determination to be overpowered.

But we are grateful for having so many urgent problems set out for us with exceptional clarity. And not the least interesting question raised by *Der Mensch*

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and die Technik is whether the Spenglerian philosophy does not lose some of its glamour by being explained clearly and succinctly.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

FRAGMENT OF A TRANSLATION

NOT twelve years old, yet in that span
Lived longer life, an early prime;
In you God's crowning mercies ran,
Anticipating Time.

Though years prolong my earthly part,
With home bereft of its delight;
No day shall find you from my heart,
Nor, darling, any night.

N.W.T.G.