THE CONCEPT OF THE MAGIAN SOUL IN OSWALD SPENGLER'S DECLINE OF THE WEST: AN EVALUATION

—*Kamāl Muḥammad Ḥabib*

Such a discussion would lead us to but one simple conclusion: the germs of the modern European culture were present in the Roman, or, for that matter, in the Hellenic civilization. As an elaboration of this evolution, we might with advantage take the case of the Chinese civilization, which, with all its pitfalls, has been more or less continuous. Joseph Needham has, for instance, suggested that the Chinese tendency to be "indelibly algebraic rather than geometric" has persisted even to this day.[93] If a civilization has been alloted only a limited span of existence and no reprieve from decline is possible, one would be hard put to it to explain the resurgence of the Mongolian races in our day, as exemplified by China and Japan. Might not all this mean that the characteristic features of the Chinese civilization — or for that matter of any other civilization — are like genes transmitted from the parent to the offspring? In the event of metamorphosis, such as the one under the influence of *pseudomorphosis,* it would not be the genes that would undergo a change, but in the event of a mutation they would. Such a mutation would occur when a culture had been entirely and completely cut off from its parent culture. Hence Spengler's theory of a culture-soul as obeying characteristics specific and endemic to it should, in effect, be more likely to intro-duce something like the Lamarekian concept of evolution — that is to say, under the influence of a changed environment, the organism or the culture would be so utterly, totally changed as to constitute a new species of organism or culture. Spengler contends that the European

[93] J. Needham and W. Ling, *Science and Civilization in China (Camb*ridge: The University Press, 1965), IV: III, xiv.

culture is an entirely different species from the ancient Hellenic culture. In fact, taking the sum-total of the progress recorded by *Homo sapiens,* one would only say that man's ' evolution has been more mental than physical, and will be so k future. *Back to Methuselah* by George Bernard Shaw, one of greatest intellectual feats of the present century, shows one of directions this evolution might take (Part *V, As Far as Thought Reach).* In his preface to the play Shaw states:

> ...those who believe that the impulse that produces evolution is creative...observed the simple fact that will to do anything can and does, at a certain pitch intensity set up by conviction of its necessity, create organize new tissue to do with it. To them therefore mankind is not played out yet. If the weight lifter, under the trivial stimulus of an athletic competition, can 'put up a muscle', it seems reasonable to believe that an equally earnest and convinced philosopher could 'put up a brain'. Both are directions of vitality to a certain end...offering us...our choice of any sort of contrivance to maintain out activity and increase our resources.[94]

This would but imply that no human community could really be regarded as a closed geographical or sociological unit, unless some very exceptional circumstance supervened, and on this *basis* we would be justified in assuming that we are correct in assessing man's progress in its totality and not through isolated case studies.

The above remarks might be regarded as a sort of interpolation. Let us carry our examination of the orientation of the latter-day Roman Empire further. Lewis emphasizes that, for modern man, dualism is one between duty and inclination:

> Take the concept of 'temptation' and nearly all that we say or think about good would vanish into thin air. But, when we first opened our Aristotle, we found to out surprise that this inner conflict was for him of so little of the essence of the moral life, that he tended to thrust it

[94] Ibid., p. xvi

> into a corner and treat it almost as a special case....The really good man, in Aristotle's view, is not tempted. Where we incline to think that good thews are more praiseworthy than mere goodness of disposition, Aristotle coolly remarks that the man who is temperate at a cost is profligate (Etic. Nicom. 1104): the really temperate man abstains because he likes abstaining. The ease and pleasure with which good acts are done, the absence of moral effort, is for him the symptom of virtue.[95]

In other words, Lewis finds that the world of the ancients was characterized by the near absence of *bellum intestinum* (the divided will) which Spengler finds to be one of the principal characteristics of the Faustian civilization. It is quite in evidence in the Roman Empire immeditately after the death of Augustus. And, according to Spengler, during the days of the Roman Empire, the Classical culture had already crossed the portal leading to its "winter". This *bellum intestinum* is already with Seneca, Epictetus, and Statius. Consciousness of having a divided will would naturally turn the mind in upon itself, and such a state of the mind should proliferate introspection, individualism, and the expression of the will through the outward forms of the soul.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* Goethe's *Faust,* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* would thus represent the Station concept of will; their symphonic assertion of the will would not be something new. The Kantian view that man subserves the judgment of universal law, and the utilitarian concept that human welfare should be the only guiding principle are thus extensions of *the bellum intestinum.* Abstinence for its own sake and virtue for virtue's sake find's no longer any acceptance; human nature has become too complex for that.

At the same time, together with the appearance of the *bellurn intestinum* during the early days of the Roman Empire, allegory, which is conceded to be an essentially modern phenomenon, is enforcing the symbolism of Greece. Allegory personifies the various facets of the will through abstract characters. These abstract characters wove themselves into the warp and

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[95] C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: The University Press, 1965), p. 60.

woof of the Mediaeval and Reformation literature of Europe. The allegories of Statius' *Thebaid* and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius (a Christian) have been incorporated in literary works like *The Romance of the Rose, The Fairie Queene,* and *Pilgrim's Progress.* Lewis further cites quotations from Seneca to show the complex picture Rome was becoming. Says Seneca, "Nobis quoque militande for we must be soldiers and in a campaign where there is no inclination and no rest)"; and, further, "...let us also conquer all things. For our prize is not a crown nor a palm nor a herald to cry our name, and virtue, and strength of mind, and peace."

If such a statement is reminiscent of the New Testament, (according to Lewis), why should it not bear any resemblance to Eckhart's: "When the soul crosses over, then she sinks down and down in the abyss of the Godhead nor ever finds a footing" (Evans 335)?

I have earlier discussed in the context of the migration of the god, Mithras, to Rome how the latter-day Romans were trying to shake off the vestments of sensuosness. If Seneca alone were an exception, the antithesis between inclination and duty could have been attributed to a mere anomaly. But it seems that Marcus Aurelius, Statius, and Prudentius (all of whom were Romans); St. Paul in Ephesians and Tertullian (both Aramaeans) were all very conscious of this internal conflict.

Comparing Sankara and Meister Eckhart, Otto avers:

> For Sankara when the *soul (atmān)* has 'come home' to the Eternal Being *(Atmān),* it has arrived *(apta), it* is at rest and fully content *(santa).* But Eckhart is, in truth, never "there", never in a final static rest...Just as the slender columns and responds of the Gothic building rise and climb and do not finish in the repose of a semicircle, but by an urge after the infinity, thrust up in the completeness of the pointed arch, so Eckhart demands the climbing spirits.[96]

Might we not by the same token say that Seneca does not desire either a crown or a palm or a herald to spread his name far and wide, but something more, something that not even ceaseless effort would give him? And might

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[96] R. *Otto, Mysticism, East and West* (New York: Collier **Boob,** *1961), p. 204.*

we not therefore suggest that the quest for the Infinite had been bequeathed to Eckhart by his Greco-Roman forebears? If Spengler, who is inclined towards positivistic and relativistic modes of thinking, and Otto (who, though he echoes Spenglerian overtones, is also profoundly Christian) share the view that the search for the Infinite is essentially a Gothic characteristic, one is justifiably led to refute them on the ground of historical evidence. The *Qur'ān* alludes to something even more than infinity when it says to man: "And verily unto thy Lord is the limit" (53:14).

Further, the core of Islām is panentheistic, and panentheism seeks quest in the Infinite only.

Now, if the Senecan mode of thinking is juxtaposed with what Spengler says of the Classical civilization, viz., "...in the classical the bodily and tangible, the sensuously-saturated prevails and therefore...in the mode of worshipping, the centre of gravity lies in the sense-impressive cult,"[97] one can only say that, whatever might have been true of the earlier literature, the latter-day Classical literature, especially the literature of the Claudian and Antonine eras, would only contradict Spengler's contention. The appearance of allegory (which possibly had its gestation in the *Aeneid)* along with the antithesis between inclination and duty is so synchronous and apposite that one would not even be able to explain its appearance on the basis of the theory of *pseudomoiphosis.* Further, if the tendency in the Faustian culture has been towards the spiralling ascendency of the will, how could one explain that from "Augustine to Calvin to Barth the torment of eternal damnation is assigned and approved independently of moral responsibility?"[98] One would therefore be justified in partly assigning this fact to the I-Thou duality which has been the recurrent feature of every civilization, but which finds its very pronounced expression in the West European civilization. Fatalism can result from the "I, subject A", becoming "the central pivot of the world to the exclusion of Thou (or God). In Islam, on the other hand, the "I" as the free centre surrenders itself entirely to Thou, and, seeking Thou, moves on to the

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[97] Spengler, *The Decline of The West,* trans. F. Atkinson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), I, 401.

[98] S. Hook (ed.), *Necessity, Indeterminism, Sentimentalism and Freedom* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 190. The remarks are Hook's

path of *ijtihād.* Heim discusses the decline of the West, from the Christian viewpoint, and observes: "...fatalism, wherever it has arisen, in Greek tragedy, in the later period of the ancient German polytheism and again in our own times, has always been merely the form assumed by a dying religion shortly before it has become extinct."[99]

Might not therefore one be led to postulate that the, *intestinum* of the Claudian-Antonine eras of the Roman Em represents the embryo which became an adult during the Reformation period of Europe? It is this divided will which Fichte. takes to the other extreme when he says that "nothing outside, matters here, but only yourself" *(Theory of Science).* Another of the battle between the will of man ("I") and the understanding of Thou thus is expressed through the medium of existentialism: and this in its embroyonic stages is present in both Lucretius Seneca. While in Islām "Thou" is not a metaphor, the W theology has been "making the eternal Thou into It, into some — making God into a thing."[100]

The Roman world, then, was becoming more and m o r e entangled in complexities, and, as it was, these complexities did not exclude the so-called "Magian" world: it too was becoming more complex simultaneously. The *Thebaid* and the *Psychomachia* are not very good poems, precisely because they are too non-sensuous, too abstract, too lacking in flesh-and-blood characters. They represent the transitory period which flowered only after the Renaissance into Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia,* and Edmund Spenser's) *Fairie Queene,* to quote only two instances. Greek civilization in its pure form might have disintegrated by A.D. 400, but the elements which we associate with the Western civilization, what ever the differences visible on the surface, are definitely present in the present-day European civilization.

Another point which Spengler emphasizes regarding the Classical man is that the

> Classical culture possessed no *memory,* no organ of history in this special sense. The memory of the Classical m a n — so to call it, though it is

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[99] K. Heim, *Christian Faith and Natural Science* (New York: Haprper Torch Books. 1959), p. 215.

[100] M. Buber. *I and Thou*, (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1959), p. 112.

somewhat arbitrary to apply to alien souls a notion derived from our own — is soma thing different, since past and future, as arraying perspectives in the working of consciousness, are absent, and the pure present, which so often aroused Goethe's admiration in every product of the Classical life and in sculpture particularly fills that life with an intensity that to us is perfectly unknown.[101]

That the present with the Greeks was there with intensity cannot be denied, but equally the concern with the self that finds its expression in existentialism might well be an alternative expression of that intensity. However, the difference between the Greek and the modern European attitudes to time has been pointed out by Bridgman from another angle. Western man, he says, has so far failed to correlate time, especially in scientific works, with experience by thinking of it as a homogeneous and one-dimensional sequence, with the past and future lying on opposite sides and separated by the present which is in continuous motion from the past to the future. The modern Western man thus, according to him, is oblivious to the time of experience, which consists of "a blurred sequence of memories culminating in the budding and unfolding present." The time of experience has a unique apex, with the possibility that everything may go awry. Modern man thinks of the time as stretching before him and, imagining himself as going to join it, he tends to build a base of probability and thinks that the future is predictable. Bridgman believes that the ancient Greek thought of himself as facing the past, with the future behind him coming over his shoulder, as the landscape unfolds to one "riding back to the engine in a train." The Greek did not deny the future; but for him the future represented an unknown variable.[102]

The Classical man, then, lived in the time of experience. But he could also live in the world of the abstract: Plato certainly does in the *Timaeus*. Be that as it may, might not one also say that the Classical "world-fear" was rooted in the experience of the ancient man, since the future to him was unknown, with man in the early stages of development, mental evolution,

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[101] Spengler, Decline, I, 9.

[102] P.W. Bridgman, Nature of Physicai Theory, pp. 29-32, quoted in W. Mays, The Philosophy of Whitehead (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 209.

and association with his environment? And equally man would of necessity visualize the concrete first and the abstract afterwards by gradually piecing together and weaving his concepts.

But even otherwise also Spengler seems to have overshot mark. Would one say that the Faustian art of historiography develop all of a sudden, and was never in the chronicle-phase? Herodotus in his *History* is a story-teller, he can also tighten framework of his narrative until it becomes objective, as, f instance, when he describes the Greco-Persian wars. And this is of historians like Plutarch, Polybius, and Tacitus too, who gave the Europe of today the notion of history. Herodotus, in his o age, was a progressive; unlike Hellanicus, his contemporary, he did not take history as "a mere record of year-to-year occurrences) without artistic design in structure or expression."[103]

Collingwood has justly criticized Spengler on the score of his contention that the Classical man lacked memory.[104] But even the text of the *Decline* itself betrays certain inherent contradictions, While discussing an entirely different subject, *viz.,* the technique of war, Spengler quotes Cato's deliberately dry insistence (and now one of the most celebrated Latin quotations), "Ceterum censeo Carthigenum esse delendum" (Carthage must be destroyed).[105] He is here quoting a pragmatic patrician and (if heartless) patriotic Roman who could well visualize the past (the first two Punic Wan from which Rome escaped by the thinnest imaginable skin of the teeth), the present (the prosperity of Carthage and its competition with Rome), and the future (lest the Carthaginian militarist oligarchy be resurrected from the ashes of the defeat suffered at Zama). Pax *Romana* therefore demanded the destruction of Carthage and the elimination of the fear of another Cannae or Trasiminus at the hands of another Hannibal who might yet shake off the yoke of [p]resent Carthaginian submission and quiescence to avenge the two wan — this time to the finish. One would hardly say that just because Cato

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[103] J.A.K. Thompson, *Classicai Influence on English Prose* (New York Collier Books, 1962), p. 19.

[104] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: The University Press 1946), p. 183.

[105] Spengler, *Deciine,* II, 422.

was looking at the past, the present and the future for him arrayed themselves in a single perspective; they would, in our age,arry themselves like that for a statesman concerned with the weal this country.

Our final conclusion would therefore be that the term "Classical" might be a convenient term for demarcating the present-day man from his ancient forebears. And, since both run into the quicksands of mixture, no one knows when and how the Classical an in the sense visualized by Spengler ceased to exist and therefore there was no Classical civilization that disintegrated in the sense implied by him; it just metamorphosed itself or rather evolved into another civilization. Nor can Spengler deny that the Ionian and Dorian migrants from Northern Europe were close siblings of the Saxons, the Vandals, and the Normans, and that they founded what beans the Gothic civilization. The same thing, by the same analogy, applies to the so-called "Magian" civilization, which has a very old history. The expanding world-vision of the Semitic people, the accidents of history, and the glory of their past, all contributed to the transfiguration and transmutation of their world-vision. In the Fertile Crescent itself possibly a pure Semitic civilization did not even exist. It is beyond any doubt that north-eastern part of the Arab Oikumene had had considerable Hittite, Kassite, and Mittanian infusions during the second millenium B.C. With the Hurrians, Hittites, and Kassites (who governed Mesopotamia from 1959 to 1171 B.C.) intermingling with the Semites, the Semitic race must have undergone considerable transformation in the result. By the time of Augustus, Syria abounded in considerable foreign elements — Armenian, Greek, and Caucasian — so that, to say that the Syrian was intensely Magian and out to shed the slough of Hellenism would be justifiable only to a very limited degree.

There are several aspects of the earlier Muslim contributions to philosophy, historiography (notably Ibn-i-Khaldun, who formulated the stages of growth in a given culture), the physical, and medical sciences, and astronomy which provide many of the links which join the Europe of the Renaissance period with that of the Dark Ages. Iqbāl subscribes to Spengler's view that the spirit of modern Europe is anti-classical; nevertheless, he highlights the fact that Spengler is at times likely to be carried away by the momentum of the generalities which he feels he has unearthed from the facts he has marshalled:

.... The anti-classical spirit of the modern w really risen out of the revolt of Islām against thought. It is obvious that such a view cannot be able to Spengler; for, if it is possible to show that anti-classical spirit of modern culture is due to the inspiration which it received from the culture immediately ceding it, the whole argument of Spengler regarding complete mutual independence would collapse.[106]

The early Muslim scientists and philosophers like al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, Al-Khwārazmī, Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Haitham and others pioneered the expansion of knowledge through the application of observation to natural phenomena. This has been taken to its perfection by the West. It might be well to recall in this context that Mondino da Luzzi's work on human anatomy, which became the standard text book during the Mediaeval Europe, was based on the original text of Bu 'Alī Sīnā. Ibn Al-Haitham's *Kitābal-Manāẓir* (Treatise on Optics) exercised considerable influence on Roger Bacon and was the source of about all that was known about light and vision till the Renaissance. Similarly Latin translations of Ibn Rushd were "widely and illicitly read" throughout Western Europe. During the Dark Ages, when the whole of Europe was tormented and obsessed with the idea of a finite, mortal, and destructible world, Ibn Rushd's view to the opposite was like a shower revivifying the parched greenery of an arid landscape. Singer says about Ibn Rushd:

Averroes was the greatest of all the Western M philosophers and one of the most influential thinkers all time... The Averroan doctrine that caused most discussion was his teaching concerning *the eternity of world,* which some of his interpreters have represented as the denial of creation ... Averroes is really an evolutionist in the true sense of the word; that is to say, he not in a single act of creation but in a creation

[106] S. M. Iqbāl, *The Reconsturction of Religious Thought in Isiam* Lahore: Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf, 1968), p. 143.

every instant in a constantly changing world, talking its new form from that which has existed previously. The world, though eternal, has *a Mover* or *Agent,* constantly producing it, and, like it, eternal. This mover can be realized by observation of the eternal celestial bodies which have a perfected existence only through their movement. Thereby may be distinguished two forms of eternity, that with and that without cause.Only the Prime Mover is eternal without cause...[107]

Arabic numerals were introduced into Europe by Pope Silvester (d. A.D. 1003), and this introduction gradually did away with the cumbersome employment of the abacus for calculation purposes. The enormous impact of the Arab numerals on the West can thus be well imagined. Leastways also, al-Khwārazmī's works on mathematics, alchemy, and astronomy were translated into Latin by Robert of Chester.

No one can gainsay that the progress of any culture depends upon the genius and collective drive of its own people: other factors can only catalyze and quicken the progress. Aristotle's Poetics, for instance, although for Spengler it spelled the stultifiction of Gothic (and therefore of Faustian) poetry and drama, passed into Italian hands through Arab sources. And all of a sudden, as if by magic, Europe began humming with life. Hence in a considerable measure --- even if one differs with Iqbāl as to the degree of the Muslim influence over Renaissance Europe — the Arabs arranged a reunion between the parent Classical culture and its lone lost modern European offspring. As emphasized earlier, such a reunion would just not have been possible without the European avidity to seize upon the repositories of knowledge from the past and its enquiring spirit. A living civilization alone spares no avenue unexplored.

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[107] C. Singer, *From Magic to Science (New* York: Dover Publications,1958), p. 89.

And here perhaps one sees the *Decline* at its worst. At times Spengler displays what verges on antipathy towards other civilisations than his own. One such glaring instance is the following passage:

> What might not have come out of Basque drama had it remained under the impression of the mighty epic and the Gothic Easter-play and Mystery in the near neighbourhood of Oratories and Passions, without ever hearing of the Greek theatre! A tragedy issuing from the contrapuntal music, free of limitations to the plastic but here meaningless, a dramatic poetry that from Orlando and Palestrina could develop...to a pure form of its own; that was what was possible and that was what did not happen; and it is only to the fortunate circumstance that the whole fresco-art of Hellas has been lost that we owe the inward freedom of our oil painting.[108]

Not only has Spengler jettisoned the spirit of an objective historian; but so emotionally has he been carried away by the golrification of the Faustian achievement in the arts that he has gone to the length of condemning his own heritage — the heritage left to Europe by Greece and Rome. In Mediaeval England and Germany the narrative was allegorical, with the purpose of telling *exampla*, and the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Sacraments, the Twelve-Requisites of Shrift, and the Twelve Graces of Shrift are introduction into the framework of the narrative, as an example of which one cite *Handlyng Synne of* Robert Mannyng of Brunne and the miracle or "mystery" plays. So neither the Anglo-Saxon nor the Gothic "Easter-play" is entirely faustian, since allegory is a latter-day Classical phenomenon, and Spengler should therefore reject the Easter-play also, because it represents, primitive Christianity, and this, of course, was Magian! In any event, when the Classical drama reached Europe again during the Renaissance period, it was seized only because apparently the miracle plays had exhausted all possibilities of further development, having no flesh- and-blood characters.

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[108] Spengler, *Decline,* I, *333*.

Let us carry the argument further. However much Spengler might try to ascribe the Classicism of Europe to taste, how did it happen that the Easter-play was relegated to the relic-house of curiosity, and its place was brazenly taken by dramas based on the Aristotelian principles of plot and action with both contemporary and ancient (Classical) themes? Nor on his own argument can he refute the fact that the modern Faustian civilization — in fiction, music, drama, and other arts — seeks its symbols not from its own Gothic or Celtic past so much as from an age that is not associated even with Rome but with Greece, that is to say, from its own primordial past now conveyed to the present age through the dim medium of myths. Even such Faustian figures as Hegel and Goethe have accorded a very high pedestal to Attic tragedy, with the former holding *Oedipus Rex* to be a work of art that can only be imitated but not surpassed. Are we, then, not justified in concluding that the "collective unconscious" of the Europe of today finds in the archetypal myths from Greece the areas of experience covered by the primaeval forests of human memory?

In his otherwise extremely illuminating discussion of Attic tragedy and its characteristics, Spengler asserts that there are two types of female characters in the Attic drama: Amazons and h*aetaerae*. Gilbert Murray, on the other hand, has convincingly shown that both in the Greek myths and in the Scandinavian Ynlinga saga occur several wives who are of the Gaia-Rhea-Clytemnestra-Jocasta type. He further suggests that it is more than probable that the Greek and Scandinavian myths derive from a common source. The character of Electra also finds a parallel in the foster sister of Amlooi, Prince of Jutland, in Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* (History of the Danes), Books III and IV, which constituted the original sources of *Hamlet*.[109]

Spengler's detailed examination of the plastic arts of Western Europe is absolutely superb, and as an elucidation of its past trends would remain so for quite some time. However, the modern European characteristics have evolved. By elaborating too exhaustively on their characteristics he tries to

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[109] *Sir* Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. *405*.

derive certain conclusions, which only succeed in complicating the issue. The irresistible appeal of Classical literature does not lie merely in its sensuousness, but also in its search for the universal within the particular. But, even if it comes to the particular for its own sake, Classical literature is not wanting in it either. An example of realistic literature from Greece is Theocritus' *Adoniazusae* (Women at the Festival of Adonis).

The Apollonian and Faustian — and for that matter the Magian — civilizations are, then, the expressions of an expanding world-vision, and not of the death of one world-vision, and the birth of another. Expansion in world-vision would be accompanied by corresponding modifications in the arts of painting and music and literary genres, not to speak of scientific experimentation, for in such cases empiricism is bound to be replaced by precise observation. And to this expansion in world-vision every culture has contributed in one way or the other.

There is, however, something substantial in Spengler's generalizations: it is only his biological interpretation of history that is questionable. Another considerable weakness of the *Decline* lies in the dogmatic and pontifical postures adopted by the author. His study on the nature of numbers and the divergent paths which mathematics adopted at the hands of the Classical, Faustian, and Magian men *is* definitely a remarkable contribution to the history of scientific thought. The Greeks systematized, and of this Aristotle and Theophrastus are the two outstanding instances. But the Greek approach to science in general was teleological (with the exception of Aristotle and Archimedes) rather than experimental, and it was the shackled version of this approach that continued in Europe down to the Renaissance period. In the modern scientific approach the phenomenal world is interpreted on the basis of repetition in Nature and the application of the interpretation not only to the human under-standing but to technological progress. The present-day scientific enquiry traces the causes from the effects; the Greeks primarily moved from the effects to the causes. A classic instance of the Greek approach would be the Platonic concept of Time., according to which Time, together with axioms (natural laws), had its birth in chaos. Life in a society holding such views would tend to move within set grooves and adjustment would therefore be difficult. Popper in *The Open Society and its Enemies*[1] has emphaized the recurrent battle between

oligarchy seeking a return to tribalism and democracy, with Plato as the arch champion of the oligarchic pattern of rulership. Added to this was the presence of the helots in the Greek society. Departure from postulates in a world-view of this kind would *be* difficult, and in ancient Greece the fixity of approach is writ large over Aristotle's *Poetics* in spite of his championing the cause of experimentation. Early Muslim pioneers like Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn al-Haitham as the pioneers of expeimentation and observation are closer to the post-Renaissance Faustians than to the Greeks.

Since Spengler regards each culture to be the equivalent of an organism, having its own individual soul, the antinomies which I have emphasized earlier are inherent in his very approach. One fails to understand why, with his encyclopaedic knowledge, Spengler should not have been able to discern the differences between the Persian and Arabic ethos, and should have insisted on the inclusion of the Sassanid-Irānian within the Magian unit, when Semitic culture has its own separate and distant heritage. Nor does he seem to be aware, for instance, that apocalypse is not a fundamental tenet of Islām, and represents an extraneous trapping.

On other scores also, Spengler adopts extreme attitudes, *e* g., on the Marcionian heresy. Marcion's attempt, it is true, was primarily directed at the resolution of the evil-good duality just as the latter-day Zoroastrian attempt was. He found evil so pervasive that he even went further than the Gnostics in putting the spirit of man besides his body, in the realm of evil *(Demiurge).*[110] Nevertheless, he still retained the Christian precept of evil, and most of the controversy in the heresy arose because Marcion tended to take the *Old Testament* at its face value and not symbolically; hence his denouncement of the God of Sacrifice of the *Old Testament,* and his reduction of the flesh to the domain of evil. Even otherwise also, Marcion's heresy is just one of the instances of the efforts directed at the resolution of the evil-good duality.

Yet, with all his failings, Spengler has made a sustained effort at the extrication of a unitary picture out of that bafflingly varied material called history. He arrived at certain conclusions, for the simple reason that for him these conclusions represent the very quintessence of history, that is, if we desire to learn from history. Heller, in this context, observes:

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[110] K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (New *Yorke Harper. 1938). p. 126.*

> It is impossible to refute such a mighty enterprise by listing...factual inaccuracies....The proper tools of empiricism can only deal with Spengler's brushwood, and inflict a few scratches on his landscape of peaks and velleys. The assertion, for instance, that Spengler's culture-organisms have no real historical existence goes right outside the range of empiricism. It is impossible to destroy analogy 'empirically', however much 'evidence' is assembled for the campaign. All historical generalizations are the defeat of the empiricist; and there is no history without them....Professor Toynbee (whom Mr. E.H. Carr accuses of wanting to have Spengler metaphysically and eat him empirically) finds it disappointing that the author of *The Decline of the West* has nothing to say about the genesis of his cultures.... But, if one grants Spengler the power of genius, then it is as meaningless to blame him for his shortcomings as it would be to reproach Picasso for sometimes ignoring the rules of perspective. For what Toynbee finds disappointing is the very core of Spengler's method.[111]

What is, however, surprising is that most of his critics, essentially correct on many points, criticize Spengler without in the least possessing his courage and daring. Lerner, while stating citly in his preface to *America as a Civilization* that his wort not meant for those "looking for the historical, the descriptive, polemic, or the apocalyptic", nevertheless does try to evolve a unitary pattern in the history of the United States. But all that he achieves is mere circumlocution. Caution of the kind betrayed by passage quoted below from the above work is definitely so pale and second-rate beside Spengler's daring:

The long journey we have made through the pages should lead to a different conclusion. There is still in the American potential the plastic strength that has shaped a great ization, and it shows itself in unexpected

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[111] E. *Heller, The Disinherited Mind* (London: Penguin Books, pp. 161-62.

ways, unpredictable moments, in disguises that require some imaginative understanding to unveil.[112]

Such a non-committal approach hardly adds anything substantial to man's effort at deriving lessons from history. Nor does the reader need to be told that history can be a matter of accident. When Spengler wrote the *Decline,* in spite of the fact that Germany was lying rather supine then, the supremacy of the West was more pronounced than it is now in many ways, at least in Asia and Africa, and no challenger was in sight. And yet, with all that supremacy ad hegemony, Spengler could see the penumbra of disintegration Lengthening in many ways: the growth of "Megalopolis", decline in the quality of the literature, and so on. One cannot therefore accuse Spengler of indulging in generalities for their own sake. Every thinker has a purpose and an aim central to his writing and thefore possesses a certain degree of bias. On the score of the bias — as this writer has emphasized earlier — it is harder to exculpate the author of the *Decline.* He has tried to correlate the individual and collective existence with history in his own way through a survey of the soul-expressions of the various civilizations that have so far flourished on our planet by defining and tracing their characteristic expressions. This in itself constituets a very original approach. For him such a correlation was well worth the risk, as it has been brothers, Collingwood, Toynbee, Dawson, and Whitehead *(Adven-true of Ideas),* to name only a few philosophers of history among many. But write[r]s like Collingwood have a limited perspectivc; they are primarily concerned with the West. Spengler did his best to forge the key that he considered proper for unlocking the door leading to the secret chamber of history. He failed, but, while many of the generalizations that he has made in the course of the attempt are arrant wr[o]ng, it is equally such generalizations that can salvage history from being converted into either a mere chronicle of facts o r gathering round it the patina of fiction.

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[112] *M. Lerner, America as a Civilization (New* York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), p. 950.

QURANIC CONCEPTION OF HIGHEST VIRTUE

"The highest virtue from the standpoint of Islam is " eousness," which is defined by the Qur'an in the following m 'It is not righteousness that you turn your faces in prayers towards east or west, but it is this that one should believe i n Allah, the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Scriptures and Prophets, and give away wealth for His sake to the near of kin orphans, and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars, and the redemption of captives, and keep up prayer and pay poor-rate, and who perform their covenant when they have anted, and are patient in distress and affliction.'

It is, therefore, evident that Islam, so to speak, transvaluates the Moral values of the ancient world, and declares the preservation and intensification of the sense of human personality to be ultimo ground of all ethical activities.

Man is a free responsible being; he is the maker of his o w n Destiny; and his salvation is his own business. There is no m between God and man. God is the birthright of every man.

The Qur'an, therefore, while it looks upon Jesus Christ as the Spirit of God, strongly protests against the doctrine of Redemption, as well as the doctrine of an infallible visible head of the charch — doctrines which proceed upon the assumption of the insufficiency of human personality, and tend to create in mane sense of dependence which is regarded by Islam as a force obstructing the ethical progress of man."

Mohammed Iqbal

Islam as an Ethical and a Political Ideal—a lecture delivered in 1908