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| **The Oswald Spengler Society**for the Study of Humanity and World History(ASBL BE0688.598.446)spengler.society@gmail.comwww.oswaldspenglersociety.comc/o Prof. Dr. David EngelsRue de Liège 754800 VerviersBelgium | https://static.wixstatic.com/media/7a5287_1dbf3d43fcae4da4aa6568c8c0f5758a~mv2.jpg/v1/fill/w_674,h_412,al_c,q_80,usm_0.66_1.00_0.01/7a5287_1dbf3d43fcae4da4aa6568c8c0f5758a~mv2.jpg |

**100 Years after the Publication of “The Decline of the West”:**

**Oswald Spengler in an Age of Globalisation**

(17-20 October 2018)

**Draft Conference Programme**

**17 October**

11h Latest Departure of the Shuttle Service from Brussels Airport

13h Latest Departure of the Shuttle Service from Cologne/Bonn Airport

14h Registration of the Participants at Blankenheimerdorf

14h15 Welcome Address by the Board of the “Spengler Society”

**Section 1: The Foundations of Spengler’s Thought**

14h30 Hercules Boshoff, Becoming Unmoved: Aristotle, Spengler and the Development of *Automation*.

15h15 Marina Christodoulou, Man and Habits. A Contribution to the Addiction of/to Life (Inspired by Oswald Spengler)

16h Coffee Break

**Section 2: The Relativity of Cultures**

16h30 Dezső Csejtei, The Role of Landscape in Spengler’s „Untergang des Abendlandes“

17h15 Gerd Morgenthaler, Das Verhältnis des Rechts zum Weltbild seiner Urheber in Oswald Spenglers Thesen zur Rechtsgeschichte

18h Break

**Keynote Speech**

18h15 Alexander Demandt

19h Drinks

19h30 Dinner

**18 October**

**Section 3: The Reception of ‘The Decline of the West’**

8h45 Jack Dumonde, Between Pessimism and *amor fati*: the Changing Anglo-American Interpretations of Oswald Spengler’s Philosophy of History

9h30 Jasper Trautsch, Oswald Spengler and ‘the West’: The Changing Interpretations of his Work in the English-Speaking Press

10h15 Coffee Break

10h45 Sven Günther / Zhang Hongxia, Spengler’s China, China’s Spengler – Intellectual Discourses between East and West

11h30 Gregory Swer, Science Fiction: Science, Vaihinger and Spengler’s Fictionalist Philosophy of Science

12h15 Lunch Break

**Section 4: On the Margins of Eurocentrism**

14h Christian Roy, Space, Time and the Christian Matrix of the Faustian Man

14h45 David Engels, Spengler on India, Mexico and Babylonia

15h30 Coffee Break

16h Froll Vladimirow, Russland: „ein matter Nachzügler“ des Abendlandes oder „das Versprechen einer kommenden Kultur“?

16h45 Common Afternoon Activity

**Evening Keynote Speech**

18h15 Max Otte

19h Drinks

19h30 Dinner

**19 October**

**Section 5: ‘Spengler heute’**

8h45 Greg Lewicki, Spengler, Networks and an EU-like Roman Empire. Why We Are Entering a Neomedieval Era

9h30 Sid Lukkassen, Spengler’s Philosophy of History as a Therapy for Naivity and Utopianism

10h15 Coffee Break

10h45 Alena Rettóva, Philosophy, Colonialism, and “The Decline of the Occident”

11h30 Closing Remarks by the Board of the Oswald Spengler Society

12h 15 Lunch Break

14h Travel to Brussels

17h Check-in in the “Motel One Brussels” (Rue Royale 120, 1000-Brussels)

**Awarding of the Oswald Spengler Price (Brussels)**

18h Ceremony: Award of the first Oswald Spengler Price (Hotel Stanhope, Rue du Commerce 9, 1000-Brussels)

20h Dinner

**20 October**

10h Departure of the Shuttle to Brussels Airport and to Cologne Airport

**Abstracts**

**(in alphabetical order)**

**Hercules Boshoff**

(PhD Student, University of the Free State, South Africa)

**Becoming Unmoved: Aristotle, Spengler and the development of *automation*.**

This contribution will explore the relation between the development of the secular order and the gradual increase in automation. It will be argued that Aristotle’s notion of the Unmoved Mover, that features prominently in scholastic philosophy, became the ideal towards which modern technology after the mechanical clockwork would develop. The purpose of the development would be to 1) set humanity free from being moved by external forces; and 2) to appropriate the power and skill of initiating movement, and therefore rendering unnecessary the external Mover. Unmoved movement is accomplished only by the individualistic Faustian spirit, with its obsession on overcoming gravity.

In its inception in ancient Greece, the idea of a self-moving machine was already connected to the sphere of the gods. It will be argued that the machine has always carried along with it this symbolic power (contrary to the notion that a machine is purely pragmatic), and the mastering of putting things into movement became the example for science and even government in early modernity. Following the clockwork and the windmill, the machine from the time of the steam engine, would eventually become the medium through which the dominion of the human mind over reality manifests.

According to Spengler, however, automation would not bring about the desired autonomy, but instead be the cause of a new form of enslavement, namely the enslavement to the machine (ironically this would happen during the time of the abolishment of slavery). Furthermore, Spengler was one of the first thinkers to explicitly challenge the manner in which unlimited freedom and wealth is accumulated through limited and exhaustible means.

Lastly, I will argue for a more harmonic relation to machines (Simondon), in which the human becomes as a conductor in an orchestra, balancing different parts, rather than being an instrument that is played on. This is not a further stage of independence and autonomy on the part of humans, but implies a certain Gelassenheit, to use Heidegger’s phrase, to Being.

**Prof. Dr. Dezső Csejtei**

(University of Szeged)

**The Role of Landscape in Spengler’s „Untergang des Abendlandes“**

Although it seems to be of a secondary importance, the landscape (Landschaft) as such plays a really important role in Spengler’s masterpiece, “Der Untergang des Abendlandes”, so it is worth of a detailed analysis.

In the first part of my paper I try to give a short summary about the different phases (artistic, geographical, philosophical) of the discovery of landscape with special regard to Georg Simmel, Martin Heidegger and two Spanish philosophers, Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset, respectively.

The second part is dedicated completely to Spengler. The landscape as such can be investigated from two aspects, from a historical and from a structural point of view. Historically the landscape plays a key-role in the formation of the fundamental units of world history, the cultures. In the paper I try to demonstrate that in Spengler’s major work a culture is the result of the dialogue between man and the landscape. That is to say, he surpasses the horizon of simple geographical determinism which considers human civilizations as simple imprints of natural environment. Furthermore, each landscape can be considered as a peculiar articulation of space in general; Spengler occasionally gives the proper term for this articulation, other times this denomination is missing. In the paper I try to characterize briefly this aspect of landscape as well.

As far as the structural aspect is concerned, landscape as such accompanies the history of a given culture, from the beginnings to the very end. The landscape does not influence essentially only the birth of a culture, but it determines its later course as well. From this point it is the development of the town that is worth considering from the tiny settlements up to the giant megalopolis’ of late civilizations. In this respect one can observe that landscape, which is the vital source of a culture at the beginning, turns to be a degraded place, a province during the later phases of civilizations. The decline of a given civilization is frequently equal to the decline of its landscape, respectively. At the end of my paper I try to illustrate this with a few shocking pictures.

All in all, Spengler has opened a new chapter in the history and philosophy of landscape in so far as he was the first to treat the relation of man to landscape from a systematical aspect of the philosophy of history. Although his theory certainly has its weak points it makes one for further considerations in this area as well.

**Marina Christodoulou**

(PhD student, Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt / University of Toulouse)

**Man and Habits. A Contribution to the Addiction of/to Life (Inspired by Oswald Spengler)**

Life is a habit, or better said an addiction, or even better an obsession. Philosophy per se can help to the moderation of this obsession/addiction, or at least to a more bearable experience of it. More specifically, a philosophical approach to leisure - laziness (and boredom), to sleep, to death, and to other concepts, might be the antidote to this obsession/addiction, that is, the therapy that can be offered to the obsession to life; if not a therapy, at least, an alleviation.

What I find absolutely relevant when thought further about, is that Spengler’s technics can be parallel to what I try to define as habit: “technics is” he says, “the tactics of living” (chapter I.2, p.10). Isn’t that how habit could be defined? Men are never “men-in-themselves”, they are born into specific time, place, race, etc (I.2, p.15), therefore they have specific technics/habits, to which habits they persist to the point of obsession or addiction to them, their will (to power) is their will to own (property: II.3), (to own life, in a way), and therefore own first of all their technics/habits, because they are “too shallow and cowardly to endure the fact of the mortality of everything living” (I.2, p.13). This condition of their mortality, forces them as a response to it, to grasp onto life, to the point of obsessing with it, with being alive; with living. All the animal world has technics (“generic technique”: II.4), but only the human develops his technics further that the generic level. This is probably due to his consciousness of mortality, among other factors, such as his anatomic and intellectual disposition towards new technics-technologies. Therefore only the human persists on what he comes to be his metaphysical property of technics/habits, which is only the dispenser of a series of other properties/ownerships, including material ones (land, wife/husband, children, goods), and not material ones such as even theories, dogmas, beliefs, archives, but beneath all, rituals and habits. He obsesses because he needs to repeat them and force them to others to exhaustion, in order to establish them and therefore preserve them, despite his mortality.

Spengler says that animals merely repeat themselves with the vehicle of the generic technique. My objection here would be that contemporary ethology says that animals develop their technics as well. And what about us? Are we superior to the fact that we repeat the same goals, because of the same fears, with different means/technics/habits all over again? Both in primitive cultures and in Civilization (to which Spengler is suspicious), the goals stay the same: the handling of our mortality. This is our obsession that ever invents new ways (habits, technics) to fulfil itself, as every addict does. We aim at persevering ourselves to the now of life: an obsession to persist and preserve, to be and continue to be the same (ontologically), which is to live, be alive. What is specifically humane is nor birth nor death, but the addiction to the in-between. Is survival the reason/mechanism of addiction or maybe is it the other way round: are we kept in life or are we surviving as a by-product of being addicted to it – in order to survive?

Spengler’s text is inspiring in many ways, and I think he senses as well a kind of addiction of man to man’s technics, which I plan to examine more.

**Jack Dumonde**

(PhD student, University of Oxford)

**Between Pessimism and *amor fati*: the Changing Anglo-American interpretations of Oswald Spengler’s Philosophy of History**

This paper examines the changing Anglo-American interpretations of Oswald Spengler’s Der Untergang Des Abendlandes from 1920 until 1970 and the unchanging academic hostility to his philosophy. It aims to fill a historiographic gap in the analysis of his work from the Anglo-American academic and literary spheres by focusing on the changing nature of the interpretative transformations his work underwent, and how these transformations little affected its academic rejection despite the contrasting philosophic nature of its reinterpretations. As will be shown, these interpretations were based upon three phases, its first from 1920-1933, its second from 1933-1945 and its third from 1945-1970. Based upon a comprehensive examination of newspaper, journal and literature articles, philosophic and academic responses in published books and his interpretation by literary figures from across this period, this paper will demonstrate that interpretations of Spengler’s work fluctuated between readings of it either as a prophecy of fatalistic despair or as an annunciation of imperialistic fervour for Germany to become the last nation of the West. The three interpretative phases of *Der Untergang* that this paper proposes generally corresponded to the changing geopolitical situation of the Euro-American world. The first phase of interpretation largely understood *Der Untergang* as a philosophic articulation of pessimism, based on the experiences of world war. From newspapers to professional historians, the Nietzschean *amor fati* that undergirded its philosophy was overlooked for pessimistic readings that stemmed from the experiences of downfall and catastrophe that its reviewers had witnessed in the First World War, with words of ‘death’ and ‘crisis’ permeating their interpretations. The second phase of interpretation corresponded with the ascension of the NDSAP to power in Germany. In this phase, the amor fati and imperialist vision of *Der Untergang* that was overlooked in the first phase was more readily ascertained, as Adolf Hitler came to be understood as the Caesar that Spengler had prophesied. With this, *Der Untergang* was interpreted as a ‘philosophy of barbarism’. The third phase of interpretation occurred after the Second World War as *Der Untergang* was again used to make sense of the devastation caused by world war. Despite these three phases however, this paper will show that amongst professional academics a common philosophical opposition had fermented against Spengler’s writings that helped seal off his work from Anglo-American academia, whether they interpreted his work as pessimism or imperial existentialism. In contrast, this paper will then highlight that outside the academic establishment *Der Untergang* had a significant impact on Anglo-American literary figures and poets during its first and third interpretative phases, where its philosophy of history and vision of decline became the mainspring of its influence with its imperial existentialism either overlooked or ignored.

**Prof. Dr. David Engels**

(Université libre de Bruxelles)

**Spengler on India, Mexico and Babylonia**

Abstract Forthcoming

**Prof. Dr. Sven Günther**

**and Hongxia Zhang** (PhD-Student)

(IHAC, NENU, Changchun)

**Spengler’s China, China’s Spengler – Intellectual Discourses between East and West**

Spengler’s works, particularly his The Decline of the West and Prussianism and Socialism, integrate China into his morphology of cultures and deal critically with Marxism/Socialism. Thus, both were of great interest for China’s intellectuals, in the

Republican period (1912-1949) as well as in the People’s Republic of China (1949- ). To point out the connectivity of Western and Eastern discourses, the paper shall, in its first part, offer a short summary of the views of Spengler on Chinese history and criticism of Marxism/Socialism within his system of cycles.

In the second part, we will then show how Chinese intellectuals and scholars got known of and were influenced by the theories of Spengler, and to what extent his thoughts were introduced into their discussions. Therefore, we will deal with the question how the thoughts were part of discourses at these different periods in the formation of modern China, attempting to explain China’s history, development, and sketching a potential future. Particularly, we shall show in which ways Spengler’s criticism of Marxism/Socialism was perceived when the movement emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, and how his ideas of rise and decline influence(d), and shape(d), the discussion of socio-political development.

**Dr. Greg Lewicki**

**Spengler, networks and EU like Roman Empire. Why we are entering neomedieval era**

Europe is currently facing the re-emergence of processes and macrostructures typical of the Middle Ages. In particular, right now it bears resemblance to the Europe from the time of the transition between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

Some of the recurring macrostructures include: the emergence of an universal, multicultural “state” with a specified philosophy of peace that justifies its existence (international relations); the great migration to Europe and its civilizational consequences (demography); a technology-related uncertainty as well as ill-information due to imperfect information management (society); the alienation of certain social groups that share a common religious identity as well as political polarization of both liberal and illiberal sensitivities (intercultural/social psychology); a rising spatial segregation in accordance with a specified set of ethnic, religious and economic variables (urbanism); a de-territorialization of legal norms and the rising public support for legal pluralism (law); neo-feudal malleability within population ready to trade liberty for security and stability (economics); the re-emergence of religions as dynamic international players (religion). Together, they form a mutually interrelated bundle of phenomena I call “integral neo-medievalism” that could be analyzed with the use of – inter alia – network theoretical and game theoretical tools.

Already Oswald Spengler analyzed a number of processes that could be deemed neo-medieval. In particular, Spengler believed that, as cultures grow old and transform into civilizations, they may form a post-historical Empire based on ‘Fellachentum’, a post-historical, expanding political entity, which creates a form a cosmopolitan ideology of peace and starts to struggle with depopulation, with the self-imposed intellectual weakness of the elites as well as with the problems generated by the urbanization of empire’s core regions. However, Spengler and other scholars that noted (implicitly or explicitly) neo-medieval trends have not succeeded in offering a broader integratory birds-eye-view.

In turn my claim is that research on the trends outlined above could supply humanities with a new scholarly tool able to describe the current evolution of Europe. It could also form a coherent research programme capable of forging a new, non-deterministic theory of globalization useful for the purpose of prognostics and foresight.

To succeed, however, we must abolish our previous notion of politics, economics and culture as autonomous spheres of inquiry. This is necessary, because the trending nature of the current changes is only understandable if one applies a network approach, that is to say if one analyses the macrostructures I consider as a multi-layered, but single and interrelated processual bundle.

Of note is that these processes are already challenging the principles of (neo-)liberalism. This is why I claim that the neo-liberal order of the 21st century will be gradually more permeated by an emerging neo-medieval order, which will reshape liberalism as we know it. As a consequence we will live in a “dappled” Europe, where many – potentially conflicting – types of order co-exist. One of the questions that might be asked in this context is what parts of the old order should be preserved for the future?

**Dr. Sid Lukkassen**

**Spengler’s Philosophy of History as a Therapy for Naivity and Utopianism**

Boom recently published a Dutch translation of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918) by Oswald Spengler. With this publication, Boom (rightly) underlines the importance and urgency of Spenglers' work for the present time. Joris Luyendijk and Thierry Baudet also contribute, according to the publisher. Apparently some of them see me – which I also take from the fact that I was approached for the project – as an heir of Spengler in the Low Countries. This will have everything to do with the word 'Avondland' in the title of my debut book *Avondland en Identiteit* (Aspekt 2015). In this treatise, I divulge my relationship with Spengler to the reader as well as the value of his work for a political philosopher.

**Prof. Dr. Gerd Morgenthaler**

(Universität Siegen)

**Das Verhältnis des Rechts zum Weltbild seiner Urheber in Oswald Spenglers Thesen zur Rechtsgeschichte**

Oswald Spengler beschäftigte sich im zweiten Band seines Untergangs des Abendlandes nach einer eingehenden Vorstellung der Gruppe der hohen Kulturen (Erstes Kapitel, II. [UdA, S. 579-617]) mit dem Problem der Beziehungen zwischen ihnen (Erstes Kapitel, III. [UdA, S. 617-655]). Da er die Kulturen als in sich selbst ruhende „Organismen“ mit je eigener „Seele“ begriff und dementsprechend die aufklärerische Idee eines stetigen kulturellen Fortschritts in der Menschheitsgeschichte ablehnte, stellte sich seiner Geschichtsmorphologie die Frage nach den Bedingungen und Grenzen der Möglichkeit einer Tradition kultureller Errungenschaften von einer Hochkultur an die andere. Wie er unter anderem am Beispiel der Kunst, Religion, Philosophie und Mathematik darlegte, hielt er eine echte Weitergabe zwischen den als Monaden verstanden Kulturorganismen nicht für möglich. Zu beobachten sei gelegentlich das „Fortwirken“ von Formelementen der Oberfläche älterer Kulturen (UdA, S. 617 f.), was aber nie als Ausdruck desselben tiefen Empfindens und Verstehens begriffen werden könne. Eine erhebliche praktische und theoretische Bedeutung habe jedoch ein Phänomen, welches er in Anlehnung an die Mineralogie als historische „Pseudomorphose“ bezeichnete. Er meint damit „Fälle, in welchen eine fremde alte Kultur so mächtig über dem Lande liegt, daß eine junge, die hier zu Hause ist, nicht zu Atem kommt und nicht nur zu keiner Bildung reiner, eigener Ausdrucksformen, sondern nicht einmal zur vollen Entfaltung ihres Selbstbewusstseins gelangt.“ (UdA, S. 784)

Als markantes Beispiel „eines Systems, das scheinbar in seinen Grundzügen unverändert durch zwei Jahrtausende gewandert ist, während es in Wirklichkeit in drei Kulturen drei vollständige Entwicklungen von jedes Mal ganz andrer Bedeutung durchgemacht“ (UdA, S. 624) und beim jeweiligen Übergang in die nächste Kultur eine Pseudomorphose bewirkt habe, schilderte Spengler die Geschichte des römischen Rechts (UdA, S. 624-655). Obwohl die Thesen zu den Beziehungen zwischen den Kulturen und zu ihren Auswirkungen auf die Rechtsgeschichte, die Spengler hier aufstellte, angesichts des damaligen rechtshistorischen Meinungsstandes ebenso ungewöhnlich wie provokant waren und es noch immer sind, wurden sie, soweit ersichtlich, seit dem Erscheinen des Untergangs des Abendlandes bis heute nicht als solche zum Gegenstand einer eingehenden rechtshistorischen Untersuchung gemacht, sondern allenfalls im Kontext bestimmter rechtswissenschaftlicher Detailfragen selektiv – und oft tendenziös – aufgegriffen (vgl. Keppeler, S. 7 ff.).

Spenglers Abschnitt zur Rechtsgeschichte (UdA, S. 624-655) enthält neben einigen angesichts seiner Geschichtsmorphologie grundlegenden Ausführungen, insbesondere zur Charakterisierung des völlig verschiedenen Wesens antik-apollinischen, arabisch-magischen und abendländisch-faustischen Rechtsdenkens, zum Phänomen der zwei juristischen Pseudomorphose und zu deren unterschiedlich prägenden Auswirkungen auf das angelsächsische und das kontinentaleuropäische Recht, auch eine Reihe von scheinbar eher beiläufigen, tatsächlich aber ebenfalls weit tragenden Einzelbeobachtungen zur Rechtsgeschichte und zum aktuellen Stand der Rechtswissenschaft, die durchaus allesamt eine eingehende Analyse und konstruktive Würdigung verdienen.

Als Vorarbeit hierfür soll auf der anstehenden Konferenz die Frage nach Spenglers Rechtsbegriff gestellt werden. Er selbst schreibt dazu unter anderem: „Jedes Recht enthält in abgezogener Form das Weltbild seiner Urheber, und jedes geschichtliche Weltbild enthält eine politisch-wirtschaftliche Tendenz, die nicht von dem abhängt, was dieser oder jener sich theoretisch denkt, sondern von dem, was der Stand praktisch will, welcher die tatsächliche Macht und damit die Rechtsschöpfung in Händen hält.“ (UdA, S. 630 – Hervorhebung im Original). Damit meint er nicht nur die heute zur rechtssoziologischen Selbstverständlichkeit gewordene Beobachtung, dass jede Gesetzgebung die Partikularinteressen der herrschenden Eliten wiederspiegelt. Vielmehr geht er vor dem Hintergrund seiner geschichtsphilosophische Thesen über die Kulturen noch deutlich darüber hinaus, indem er behauptet, dass zentrale Rechtsinstitute wie „Person“ und „Eigentum“ im Laufe der kulturübergreifenden Geschichte des römischen Rechts jeweils völlig abweichende Bedeutungen hätten annehmen müssen, und dass die Herangehensweise der heutigen Rechtswissenschaft den drängenden Fragen unserer Zeit schon deshalb nicht gerecht werden könne, weil ihr gesamtes Denken in einem über die Kulturen und deren Entwicklungsphasen hinweg „fortwirkenden“ römischen Recht verharre, welches tatsächlich nur pseudomorph erstarrte und damit verfälschende Form sei: „Was wir bis heute Rechtswissenschaft nennen, ist also entweder Philologie der Rechtssprache oder Scholastik der Rechtsbegriffe. Es ist die einzige Wissenschaft, die heute noch den Sinn des Lebens aus ‚ewigen‘ Grundbegriffen ableitet.“ (UdA, S. 652)

Dass Spengler damit jeden vordergründig normativistischen Rechtspositivismus ebenso ablehnte wie die Vorstellung von der Möglichkeit einer willkürlich dezisionistischen Rechtsgestaltung, ist offensichtlich. Interessanter dürfte die Frage sein, was er positiv unter ‚Recht‘ versteht und wie sich sein Begriff von dem anderer, ähnlich voraussetzungsreicher Klassiker unterscheidet, die ihr Rechtsdenken ebenfalls historisch und kulturphilosophisch fundierten, wie z.B. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel und Carl Schmitt. Dieser Frage soll im Rahmen der anstehenden Konferenz nachgegangen werden.

**Prof. Dr. Max Otte**

(Universität Worms / Universität Graz)

**Abstract forthcoming**

**Dr. Alena Rettová**

(Reader, SOAS, University of London)

**Philosophy, Colonialism, and “The Decline of the Occident”**

Oswald Spengler was among the first to theorize the “end of Europe” in his *Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918, English translation *The Decline of the West*). He was followed by philosophers such as Edmund Husserl in 1936 in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* or Jan Patočka in his *Evropa a doba poevropská* (1992). These philosophers express their fascination with the “Greek miracle” of the birth of philosophy which they see in the explicit separation of logos from mythos. They go on question the validity of this narrative following the historical developments of the 20th century. Poststructuralist thinkers have questioned the “Grand Narrative” of Western Philosophy, to speak with Lyotard, and indeed the role of mythos in “rationality” (Barthes). But it is postcolonial theory that stipulates that Europe already “ended” in the moment European knowledge transformed itself into an instrument of power, set out to conquer other regions of the world. Building upon insights from Heidegger’s critique of the *Gestell* and Adorno’s *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, postcolonial theorists show how the European philosophical *theoria* was transformed into instrumental rationality and, ultimately, a machinery of violent conquest. African thinkers, such as the Cameroonian Marcien Towa, urge the formerly colonized nations to “get hold of the ‘secret’ of the West” (*s'emparer du « secret » de l'Occident*, Towa 1971: 40), of the West’s scientific know-how, so that they, too, become powerful and, consequently, “uncolonizable” by the West. Also Kwasi Wiredu sees European philosophy at the root of European science, itself instrumental to the development of technology. All these philosophers identify Europe with its epistemology. Yet, in the political implications of European knowledge, the emphasis shifts from epistemology to ethics. As Aimé Césaire bluntly states, just as the colonizer dehumanizes the colonized, so s/he dehumanizes him/herself. This paper explores the interconnections between early theorists of the “end of Europe”, prominently Oswald Spengler, and the contemporary critique of Europe by postcolonial thinkers.

**Dr. Christian Roy**

**Space, Time and the Christian Matrix of the Faustian Man**

An avid but critical reader of ‘The Decline of the West’, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy maintained that European peoples of the second millennium answered with ever-more material calls to salvation the spiritual appeals of the first-millennium Church. This gave rise, since the World Wars as ultimate world revolution of total mobilization, to the global “ecumenical” economy of mankind throughout the natural expanse of the actual planet, in contrast to previous empires that were but cultural worlds unto themselves, each in their own region and time-span. As heirs to the Magian world of early Christianity that lives on in Eastern Churches, Orthodox thinkers like Christos Yannaras are keenly aware that this world-historical development that overwhelms their cultures as all others is the outcome of its “Western pseudomorphosis” (Spengler I§3-II.6). They thus bring important insights on the latter’s process, since the genesis of Faustian culture exactly coincides with the Great Schism of a breakaway Western Church. Among them is one they share with Rosenstock-Huessy: that the systematic conquest of space owes much to the religious-cum-civilizational need to secure it in extension in the unruly Far West of continental Europe.

Drawing on the Toronto School of communications studies, we might contrast with Harold Innis this Faustian civilization of space to the older Byzantine civilization of time, also noting with Marshall McLuhan how this matched a shift in the economy of the sensorium from audile-tactile to visual dominance, consummated in the Gutenberg Galaxy of print culture. And yet, if Faustian patterns show no sign of abating in the neo-acoustic electric environment of the global village, could it be that their projective relation to space as infinite reserve really goes back to a uniquely Western “visual-tactile” paradigm incipient in the translation of Christianity to the European landscape, now contagiously spread worldwide within the mentality of technological society?

**Dr. Gregory Morgan Swer**

(Lecturer, University of Zululand)

**Science Fiction: Science, Vaihinger and Spengler’s Fictionalist Philosophy of Science**

Contemporary interest in Spengler’s thoughts on science tend to be restricted to his pronouncements on the imminent demise of science. However, the considerable attention given to scientific matters in the philosophy of the early Spengler indicates the significance that he attached to the topic of science. Spengler’s analysis of science, when reconstructed, constitutes a coherent and developed philosophical position on the nature and practice of science. In other words, I argue that Spengler has a philosophy of science. Furthermore, I argue, this philosophy of science is not simply the application of Spengler’s views on world-history to the field of science, but varies significantly from the views taken to be typical of Spengler’s philosophy of history. As such, Spengler’s philosophy of science is not a reiteration of his received philosophical position in a scientific context but represents aspects of Spengler’s philosophical outlook that have not been fully appreciated or explored hitherto, namely his commitment to a form of philosophical fictionalism.

In addition to detailing the key components of Spengler’s philosophy of science, this paper will draw out the fictionalist implications of his position through comparison with the philosophy of Hans Vaihinger. Spengler’s fictionalism, I suggest, bears enough similarity to Vaihinger’s to suggest the influence of the latter on the former. I shall argue however that Spengler’s commitment to fictionalism is far more radical and thoroughgoing than that put forth by Vaihinger and extends beyond the realm of science to all forms of human activity. In this way it raises the possibility that not only is Spengler’s philosophy of science fictionalist, but that his general philosophy is likewise fictionalist. The consideration of this possibility suggests a radical reinterpretation of Spengler’s philosophy of history, and a possible solution to the interpretative debate over the relativist or positivist nature of Spengler’s philosophy.

**Dr. Jasper M. Trautsch**

(Lecturer, Universität Regensburg)

**Oswald Spengler and ‘the West’: The Changing Interpretations of his Work in the English-Speaking Press**

This paper analyzes the reception of Oswald Spengler’s sensational work *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. It does so by examining the reviews of the two volumes and all the articles referring to the German historian-philosopher in a broad selection of newspapers and magazines from these countries such as the London Times, the Manchester Guardian, the Economist, the Spectator, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Time, New Republic, Harper’s Magazine, the Toronto Star, and the Globe and Mail from the date of the publication of its translation into English in the 1920s to the late 1950s.

In particular, this paper focuses on how the English-speaking audiences related their countries to the concept of the *Abendland* that Spengler developed in his work. It argues that, while initially Spengler’s oeuvre received a rather mixed reaction, as his *Abendland* concept appeared Germano-centric and seemed to reduce the Anglo-Saxon sphere to a secondary role, it was re-interpreted in the context of the early Cold War when it was used to justify the bipolar postwar order and America’s increasing financial and military commitments to Western Europe. In an ironic twist, North Americans – whom Spengler had viewed with skepticism if not disdain in the 1920s and 1930s – began increasingly referring to his work in the 1940s and 1950s to claim a dominant role towards Western Europe for themselves. While Western Europe as the cradle of “Western Civilization,” many newspaper commentaries found, was indeed declining, as Spengler had predicted, the U.S., as its offspring, was still young and thus able to rejuvenate and thus prolong “the West’s” lifecycle. It therefore had a responsibility to protect Western Europe not only from Soviet communism but also from those defeatist voices within the “Old World” that discouraged vigorous resistance against “the East.”

The fact that Spengler’s work could be read in these competing ways was, on the one hand, due to the fact that in his books the German historian-philosopher was not always clear about which role he believed the English-speaking countries would play and their proper place within the “*Abendland*” and, on the other hand, to the ambiguity of the term “West,” which was used to translate “*Abendland*” into English in the titles of the British and American editions. The paper will therefore also critically discuss the term “West” and emphasize that English-language newspapers and magazines used different terms such as “Western civilization,” “Western culture,” and “Occident” when reviewing *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* depending on the message they wished to convey.

**Froll Vladimirow**

**Russland: „ein matter Nachzügler“ des Abendlandes oder „das Versprechen einer kommenden Kultur“?. Zur Notwendigkeit einer Radikalisierung von Oswald Spenglers Geschichtsphilosophie**

Den Ausgangspunkt der Betrachtungen bildet Spenglers Idee der „russischen Vorkultur“: Beim Übergang zu der Phase der Hochkultur soll sich das Russentum von der abendländischen Zivilisation emanzipieren und durch die Entfaltung seines Ursymbols die eigene Realität erzeugen. Die Konzeption von Hochkulturen als „Einzelwelten des Werdens“ – also multipler Realitäten – hielt Spengler für seine „kopernikanische Entdeckung im Bereich der Historie“. Doch die Entdeckung bleibt unvollendet, denn die „Einzelwelten“ werden weiterhin in Kategorien der naturwissenschaftlichen, also europazentrischen, Weltanschauung gedacht. Die Möglichkeit, die Kulturmorphologie von den Resten des Europazentrismus zu befreien und eine wirkliche Gleichwertigkeit der Spengler’schen Hochkulturen herzustellen, soll in der Überwindung der Dominanz von naturwissenschaftlicher Weltanschauung gesucht werden. Vor dem Hintergrund der technischen Überlegenheit der naturwissenschaftlichen Zivilisation des Abendlandes kann dies auf dem Weg der Empirie nicht erreicht werden, wohl aber durch die konsequente Weiterführung der von Spengler unternommenen Dekonstruktion der wissenschaftlichen Epistemologie. Denn heute weniger denn je kann Wissenschaft einen Test des radikalen Zweifels bestehen und damit sich selbst philosophisch begründen. Wie alle anderen Mythen auch, gründen sich wissenschaftliche Theorien auf den Glauben an bestimmte philosophisch unbeweisbare Evidenzen, und dieser Umstand macht sowohl wissenschaftliche Weltanschauung als auch die westliche Zivilisation im Ganzen mit anderen Kulturen durchaus vergleichbar. Da das erkennende Subjekt wie das erkannte Objekt ebenfalls keine Prüfung durch den radikalen philosophischen Zweifel bestehen, sondern sich vielmehr im Glauben gründen, gibt es keine Notwendigkeit, den Glauben als Intentionalität eines Subjekts in Bezug auf ein Objekt zu verstehen. Der Glaube erweist sich somit als eine Quelle sowohl der Subjektivität als auch der Objektivität. Es handelt sich daher nicht um Kognitionsobjekte und -subjekte, sondern um das Glaubende und das Geglaubte schlechthin, das jeder Erkenntnis zu Grunde liegt. Im Endeffekt gilt der Glaube als das ultimative Maß der Wissenswahrheit. Dieses Realitätsverständnis erschließt eine Möglichkeit, die Welt als Vielfalt von dynamischen Glaubenssystemen zu begreifen, die im vorliegenden Beitrag mit dem Begriff „Mythos-Systeme“ definiert werden. Durch den Vergleich der schöpferischen Begabungen einzelner Kulturen als einer Art von Mythos-Systemen nach dem Kriterium der Formenvielfalt und Sinnreichhaltigkeit kommt der Autor zu dem Schluss, dass der schöpferische Höhepunkt der Weltgeschichte in den zwei Jahrtausenden vom 7. Jh. v. bis 13. Jh. n. liegt. Die darauf eintretende schöpferische Auszehrung der Kulturen führt erst zu der „Entzauberung der Welt“, dann zur Unifizierung der Menschheit und schließlich zu deren Vereinigung auf den utilitären Grundlagen der westlichen Globalisierung. Ob im Zeitalter der schöpferischen Entkräftung die von Spengler vorhergesagte Geburt der russischen Hochkultur aus der russischen Vorkultur überhaupt möglich ist, darf als Hauptfrage der Neuzeit gelten. Soll der schöpferische Akt in einem postschöpferischen Zeitalter doch möglich sein, dann wird die letzte Hochkultur den Niedergang der Geschichte um einige Jahrhunderte aufschieben. Das Ende des weltgeschichtlichen Zyklus wiederholt in vielen Aspekten den Untergang einzelner Hochkulturen und manifestiert sich in einem fortschreitenden Abbau der hochkultivierten Lebensformen und zunehmender Vereinfachung des Menschentypus bis zu der Rückkehr zu einem primitiven seelischen Leben der vorhistorischen Zeit.