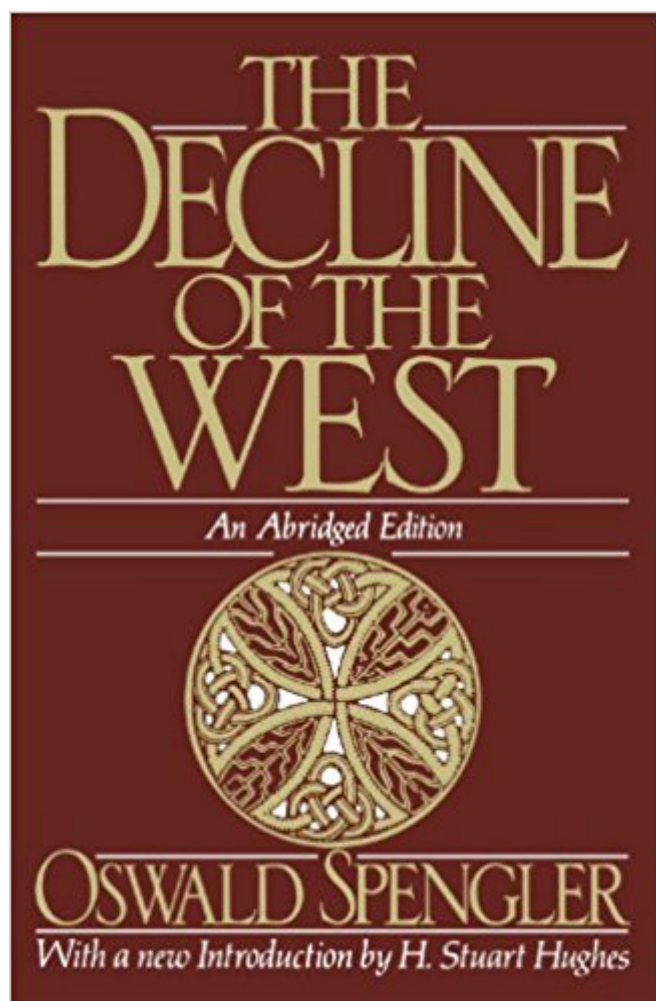


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# The Decline Of The West (Oxford Paperbacks)



## Synopsis

Since its first publication in two volumes between 1918-1923, *The Decline of the West* has ranked as one of the most widely read and most talked about books of our time. In all its various editions, it has sold nearly 100,000 copies. A twentieth-century Cassandra, Oswald Spengler thoroughly probed the origin and "fate" of our civilization, and the result can be (and has been) read as a prophesy of the Nazi regime. His challenging views have led to harsh criticism over the years, but the knowledge and eloquence that went into his sweeping study of Western culture have kept *The Decline of the West* alive. As the face of Germany and Europe as a whole continues to change each day, *The Decline of the West* cannot be ignored. The abridgment, prepared by the German scholar Helmut Werner, with the blessing of the Spengler estate, consists of selections from the original (translated into English by Charles Francis Atkinson) linked by explanatory passages which have been put into English by Arthur Helps. H. Stuart Hughes has written a new introduction for this edition. In this engrossing and highly controversial philosophy of history, Spengler describes how we have entered into a centuries-long "world-historical" phase comparable to late antiquity. Guided by the philosophies of Goethe and Nietzsche, he rejects linear progression, and instead presents a world view based on the cyclical rise and decline of civilizations. He argues that a culture blossoms from the soil of a definable landscape and dies when it has exhausted all of its possibilities. Despite Spengler's reputation today as an extreme pessimist, *The Decline of the West* remains essential reading for anyone interested in the history of civilization.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a splendid edition. The introductory material is pointed and intriguing. The editing is superb. This volume is the best, and realistically, the only way to introduce Spengler to undergraduates."--Daniel P. Murphy, Hanover College

"There is nothing in our contemporary literature quite like the experience of reading Oswald Spengler's classic *The Decline of the West*....There is no matching his throwaway erudition, the sheer poetry of his symbols and images and the vaulting majesty of his thought....Especially welcome for the brief but brilliantly incisive preface by America's best Spengler scholar, H. Stuart Hughes."--The Washington Times

"An abridged edition of Spengler's classic is long overdue. It is one of the great masterpieces of German historical prose, and the translation conveys the beauty and eloquence of the original language. Its importance to today's student should be immediately grasped by anyone who appreciates the problem of decline and its relevance for contemporary American (and Western) society."--William Falcetano, Merrimack College

"Often damned but still cited (the very title can turn a whole evening into a disputation), it is still a provocative and often dazzling book....An exciting excursion through history."--Time

"Apocalyptic in tone, it is a massive, somber interpretation of the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations, much in the spirit and tradition of historical analysis displayed by another twentieth-century prophet, Arnold J. Toynbee....The contemporary reader will find much that is stimulating in Spengler's criticism of our age."--San Francisco Chronicle

"What [Spengler] wrote was an epic poem....The lesson to be learned from him is that writers too can be seismographs; the trembling of Spengler's themes signaled the coming of the Nazi earthquake."--New Statesman

Text: English (translation) Original Language: German --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I really wanted this book, so I took a chance on getting the digitized version. I feared the worst; extra line breaks, missing text or diagrams, the usual problems with translation and digitization. I haven't finished reading it yet, but I have flipped through to examine the pages. I'm certain we all do that to make sure a newly digitized book is going to flow correctly and not gravely disappoint half way through. The formatting is absolutely impeccable, footnotes are easily discernible and perfectly formatted, and the translation is marvelous. Charles Atkinson was the perfect choice as translator. Nothing is left to the imagination in regards to what is being said. I'm very pleased with my purchase, and would recommend this book to anyone.

Don't bother with this translation. Find another one. Not only is the machine-scanned text full of bizarre and jarring errors that could be easily fixed by any human editor, the most diplomatic thing I can say about the translation is that it lacks "grace". It is far too literal and very clumsy. One would think that the translator is obviously not a native English speaker and has no ear for real English, spoken or written, yet his name is Charles Francis Atkinson. I think Spengler is a "period piece" worth reading, but this is not a translation or book I can recommend to anyone. Personally, I will read him in the original German instead--it's clearer and less of a struggle than reading this mangled English text. This is probably the worst and most amateurish translation of academic German I have ever seen. It is unimaginable that it was actually published again by !

The work itself is excellent and I recommend reading it to everyone. However, do not purchase this edition. Not only is it large and unwieldy, but the printing quality is extremely poor. The pages look like scanned copies of the original that have been pasted to much larger pieces of paper, and then bound together and sold as a book. All in all, it seems like a poorly disguised way of cashing in on a book that has been in the public domain for some time now. If you want to purchase a print copy of this book, there are far better options.

I find that the errors in the text make it difficult to read. I can't get a flow going due to the problems in the formatting as well as the numerous incorrect breaks in lines and paragraphs. There are other places on the web to find the correct formatting.

I am so glad I found a copy like this one. There are many copies floating around, which have not been properly digitalized, thereby making my reading experience not as great as it could be. However, I have found this edition to be well edited and readable. The foreign words and page breaks and random misspellings that do not usually cross over very well have in this copy. In brief, it is very readable. The book itself is excellent; it is one of those you can't put down. I love all the subtle connections Spengler makes throughout the text. He has a very powerful and well-constructed thesis; indeed it is relevant even today as we can see many of aspects he speaks of all around us. This is not to say he is spot on, yet if one were to look around at art, music, architecture and the like, one would no doubt see some connections. I enjoy books that do this for me, that is, learn so I become more aware of my environment.

Here's a good example of the necessity of reading the fine print. I ordered this "abridged" version of

Spengler without looking carefully at the "product details". This was because there's a standard abridged edition of the book, published by Knopf, that's 480 pages in length. (Apparently the original is 1,000+ pages). What I was sent is a piece of worthless trash 56 pages in length!!!!!! I can hardly accuse the seller of duplicity, though I think "abridged edition" is almost purposely misleading, given the Knopf (and reprints of the Knopf). Is a book that's 1/20 of the original work an "abridgement"? In any case, let the buyer beware of this "edition"!!!

Hope these comments save people some time and trouble. If you go past the first page or so, of this sample, you'll see that this volume has been converted to electronic format, though it lacks a linked TOC. This 99 cent version is the same as the 7.99 version ([http://www..com/Decline-West-c1918-Illustrated-ebook/dp/B004Q3RTDS/ref=sr\\_1\\_21?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369377850&sr=1-21&keywords=spengler+decline+west](http://www..com/Decline-West-c1918-Illustrated-ebook/dp/B004Q3RTDS/ref=sr_1_21?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369377850&sr=1-21&keywords=spengler+decline+west)) which has the extra pictures that you can also see in that sample, and which also lacks a linked TOC. Be sure you look at the samples here first, because I came across one for \$2.99 that simply had the old pages scanned in but not electronically converted, making viewing difficult ([http://www..com/Decline-West-TOC-ebook/dp/B007JL2Q46/ref=sr\\_1\\_14?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369377850&sr=1-14&keywords=spengler+decline+west](http://www..com/Decline-West-TOC-ebook/dp/B007JL2Q46/ref=sr_1_14?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1369377850&sr=1-14&keywords=spengler+decline+west)). But you could read the first 3 chapters with not much difficulty in the Preview online. The best buy (for 99 cents) is this version you are viewing now.

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