

Abstract

The theme of the diploma thesis is the concept of decadence as seen from the perspective of two idiosyncratic and highly controversial thinkers, Georges Sorel (1847-1922) and Oswald Spengler (1880-1936). While the peculiar Marxist Sorel, famous for his contributions to the theory of revolutionary syndicalism, is today often characterized as an intellectual "godfather" to fascism, Oswald Spengler did serve as a model for German Nazism in many ways, although his relationship to it was ambivalent at best.

However, the decadent character of the thought of both authors clearly shows us that their connection to the far right is not a mere coincidence. Benito Mussolini himself was reported to have said that he owed more to Sorel in his thinking than he did to Nietzsche, while Oswald Spengler referred to Sorel as one of the few socialists who considered "the defence of the fatherland, family and property" to be "the main and the most noble task of the proletariat". It is not surprising, then, that both authors saw decadence as an incessant danger. The theme of social decay and moral regeneration is thus a major point of convergence in the work of both Georges Sorel and Oswald Spengler.

It is this point of convergence, in both a moral and civilizational sense, that is the key theme for the thesis in terms of comparing the two authors. The comparison between Georges Sorel and Oswald Spengler is based on an analysis of their views on decadence, on the causes of decadence, on its characteristics and also on potential ways of redemption from decadence. This analysis is based on the central concepts of the thought of the aforementioned authors, such as Oswald Spengler's biologizing, cyclical conception of history and Georges Sorel's moralistic view of society and his persistent search for the possibility of a movement capable of reversing this decadence and revitalizing society.

Keywords

Spengler, Sorel, decadence, vitalism, 19th and 20th century, fascism, Counter-Enlightenment, heroism, Fin de siècle, civilization, culture, myth