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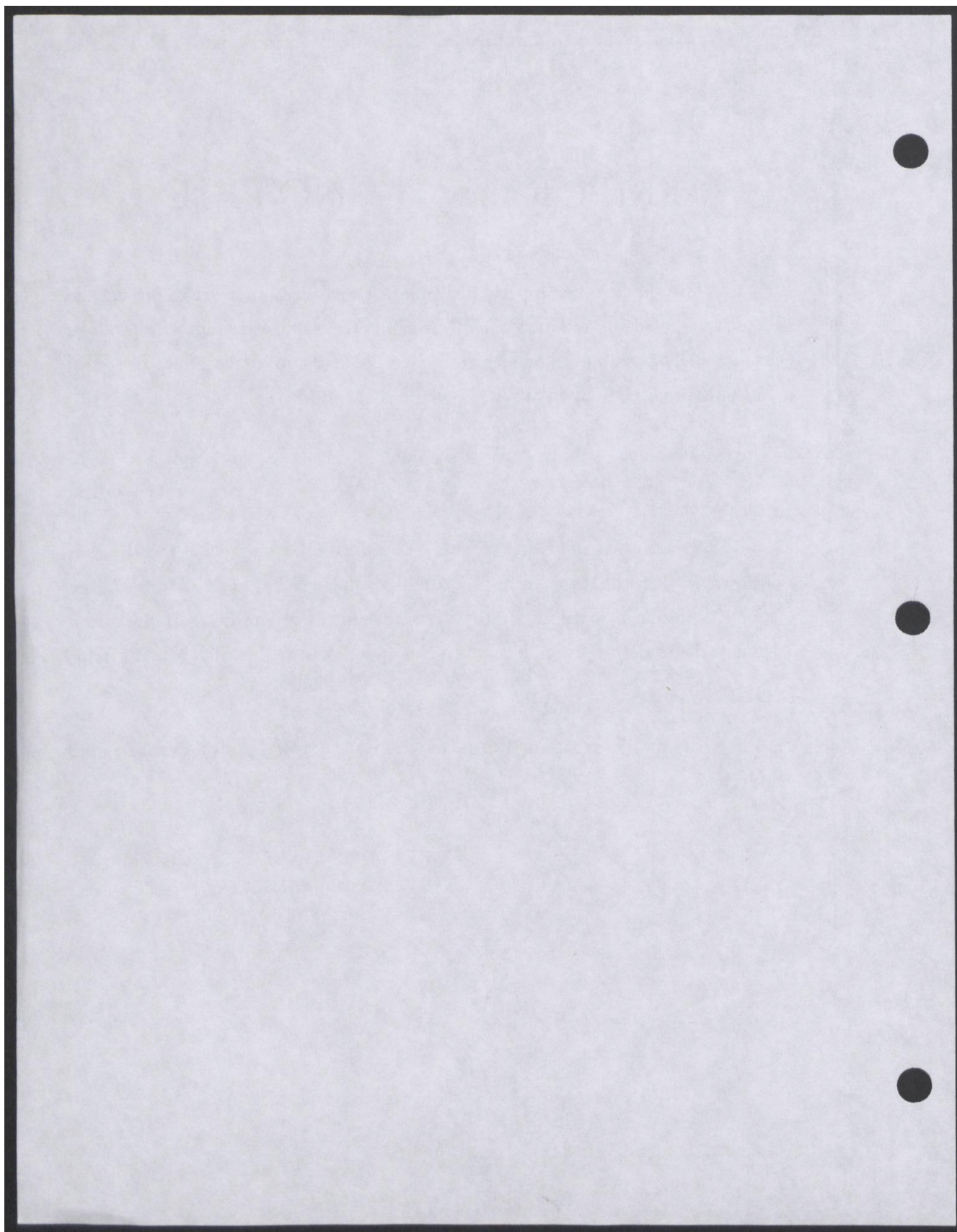
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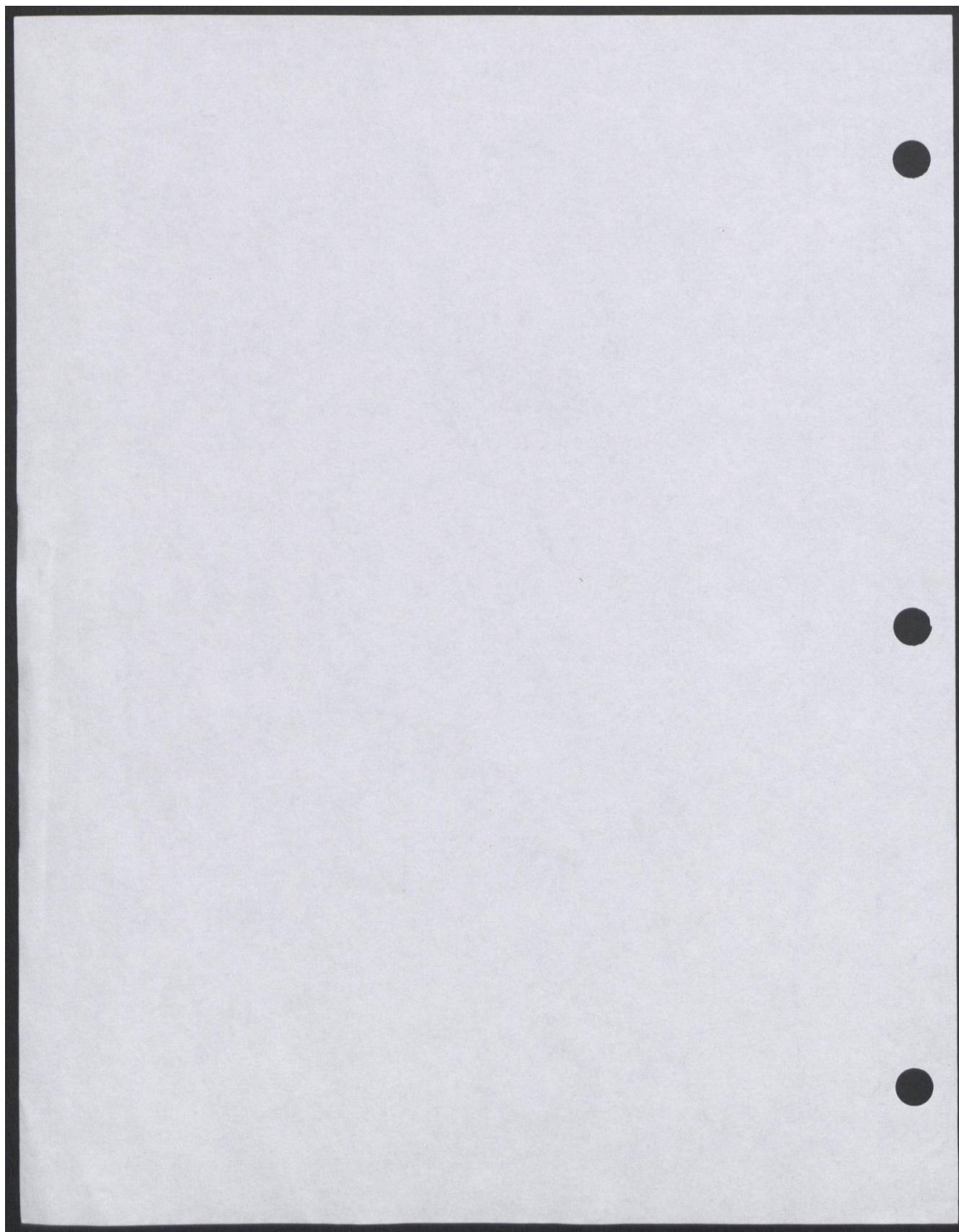
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THE MEANING OF HISTORY  
(Reflections on Spengler, Toynbee and Kant)

Henry A. Kissinger

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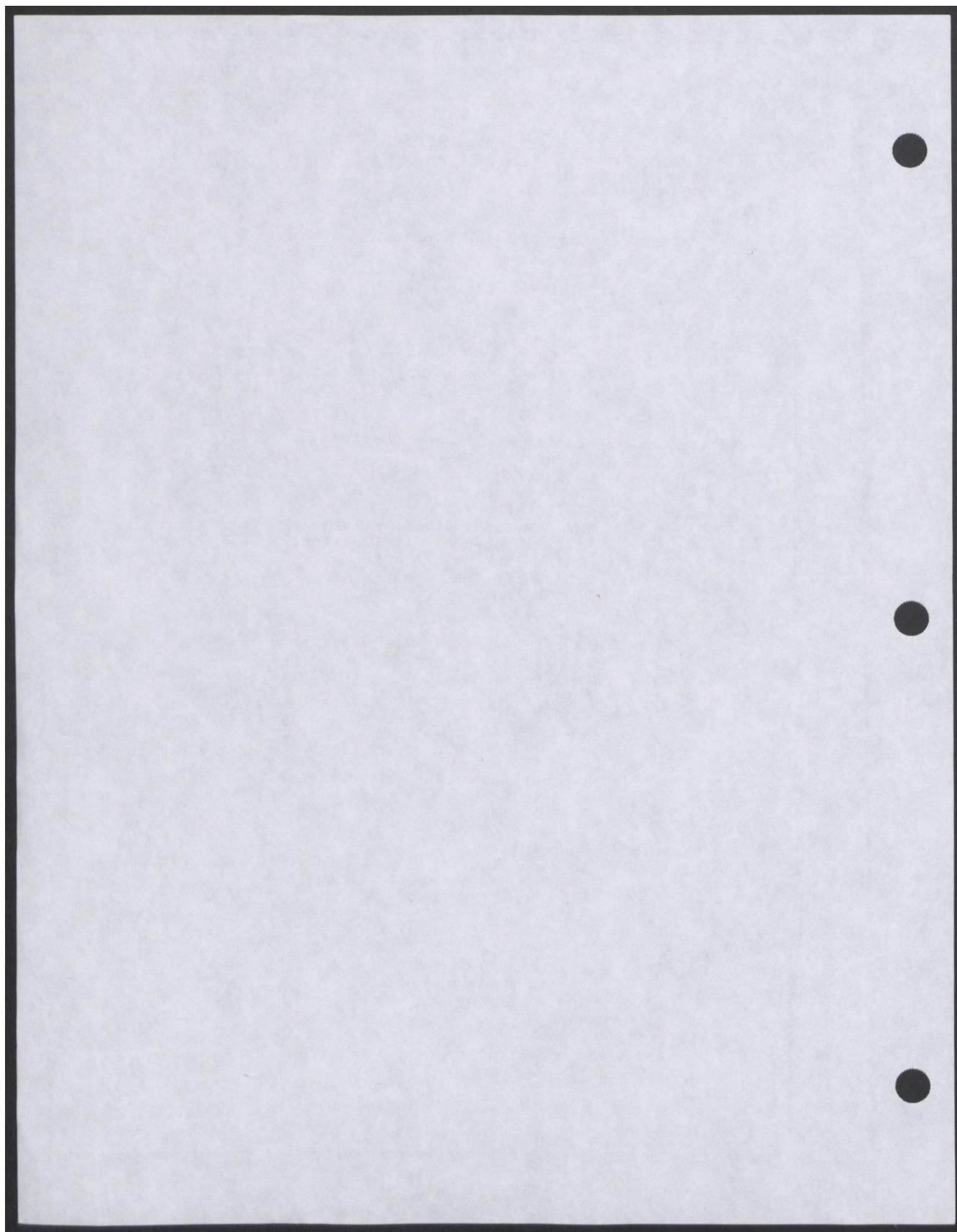
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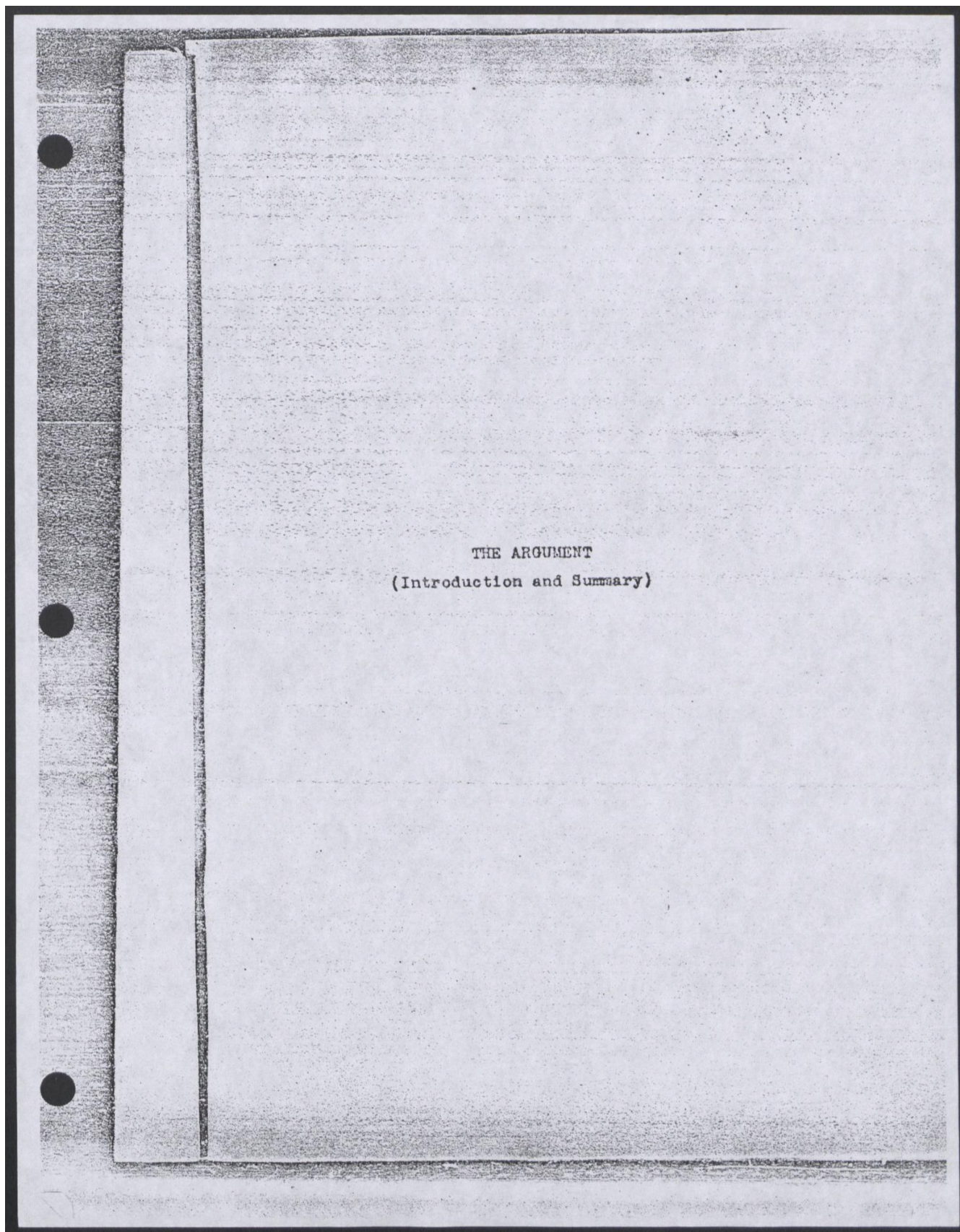
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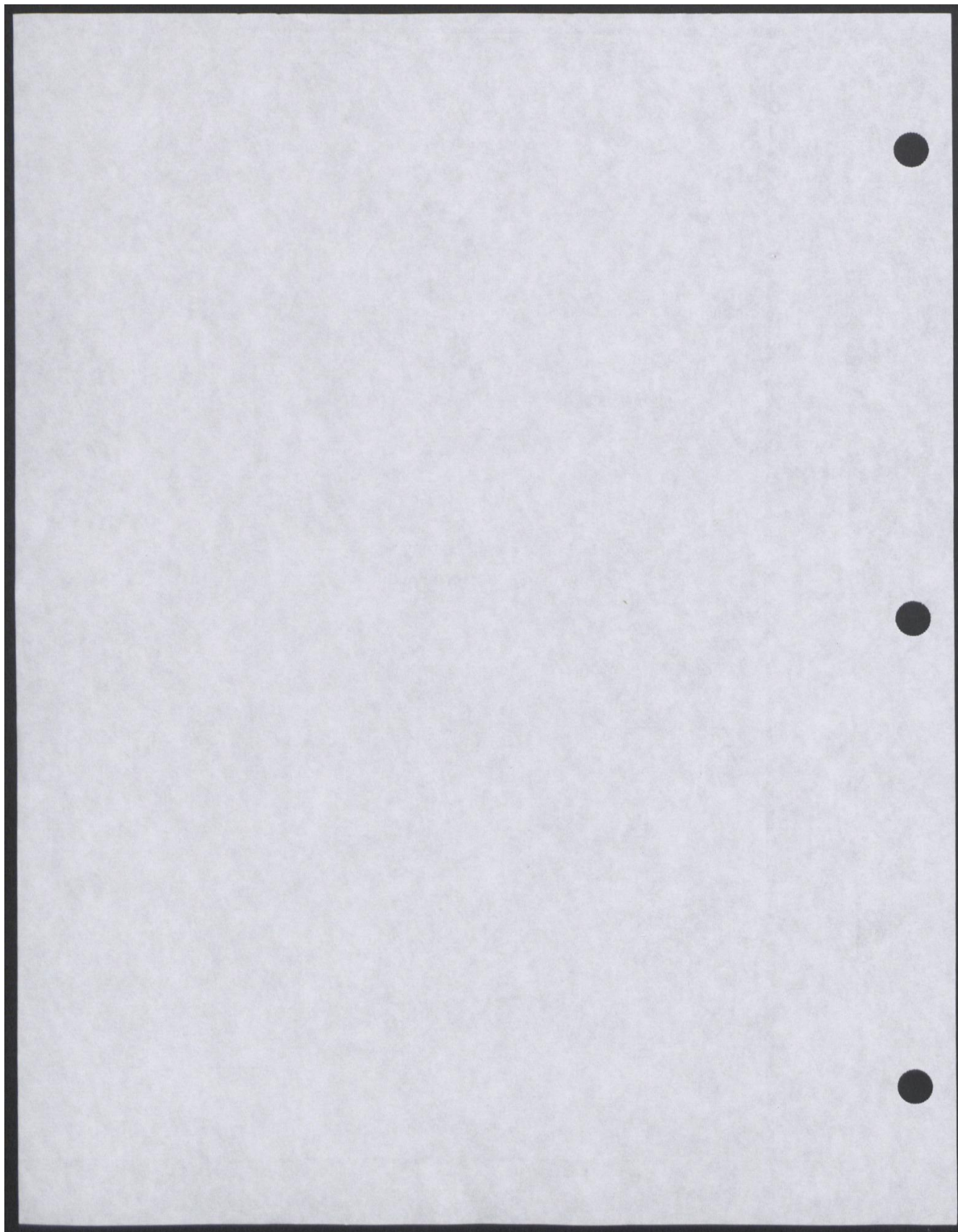
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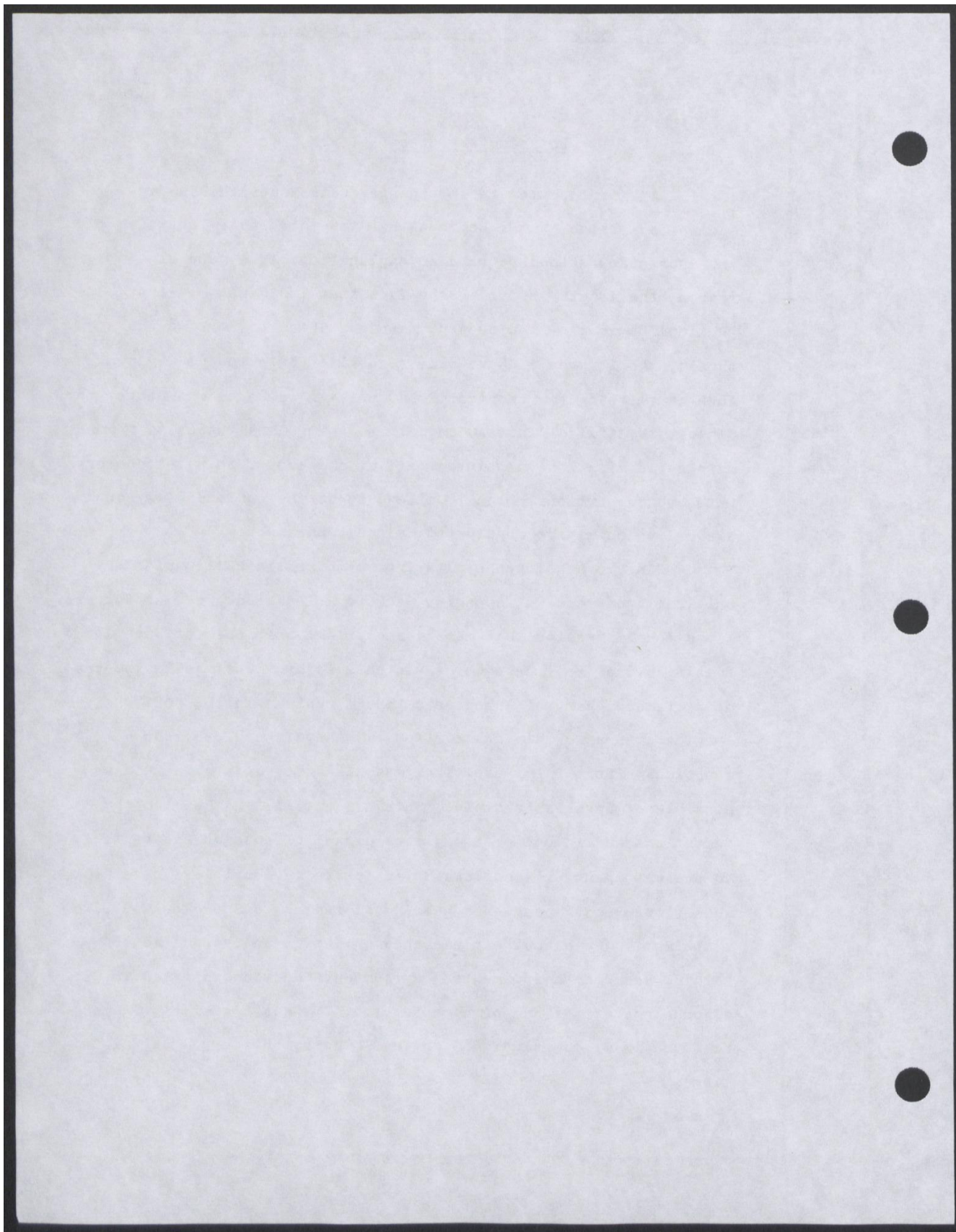
-I-

Introductory Note.

An introduction to an undergraduate honor thesis may seem presumptuous, but I believe that its inordinate length and unorthodox method require an explanation. As a general reason, the length is due to the fact that I did not realize the implications of the subject when I started to work on the thesis. As it grew, I have made several efforts to cut it down, such as omitting the chapters I had written on Hegel and Schweitzer. Since this still did not succeed in reducing this thesis to a more manageable size I have pointed out, at the end of this introductory note, those portions which I believe to be the nucleus of my analysis and which may be considered my honor thesis.

The methodology results from my dissatisfaction with the critical treatments of Spengler, and to a lesser degree, of Toynbee. I had the impression that merely analytical criticism of Spengler falsifies the real essence of his philosophy. Just as in the case of Nietzsche, part of Spengler's impact resides in the poetic imaginativeness of his descriptions. I have therefore made a conscious effort in my expository passages to capture as much as possible of Spengler's style. This has entailed rather lengthy quotations and in one or two places close reliance on the text. To present Spengler's philosophy as fairly as possible I have kept such clauses as "Spengler argues", "according to Spengler" etc. to a minimum. The expository passages are to be understood as containing Spengler's arguments. My comments are concentrated in discussions at the end of each section. My basic analysis is to be found in my "Conclusions" on the Chapter, "History - as - Intuition".

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I have followed essentially the same methodology with Toynbee. Here too purely analytical criticism falsifies the stately empirical approach. I have discussed each of Toynbee's main headings at sufficient length to indicate his method, though, except for a very few instances, I have omitted all his illustrations. Again, all my comments are contained in an introductory paragraph and in a concluding section to each heading. Again, my fundamental criticisms are to be found under the title "Conclusions" at the end of the Chapter "History-as-an-Empirical Science".

In each case the expository passages are preceded by a discussion of the author's metaphysical assumptions, to explain their structuring effect on the subsequent philosophy.

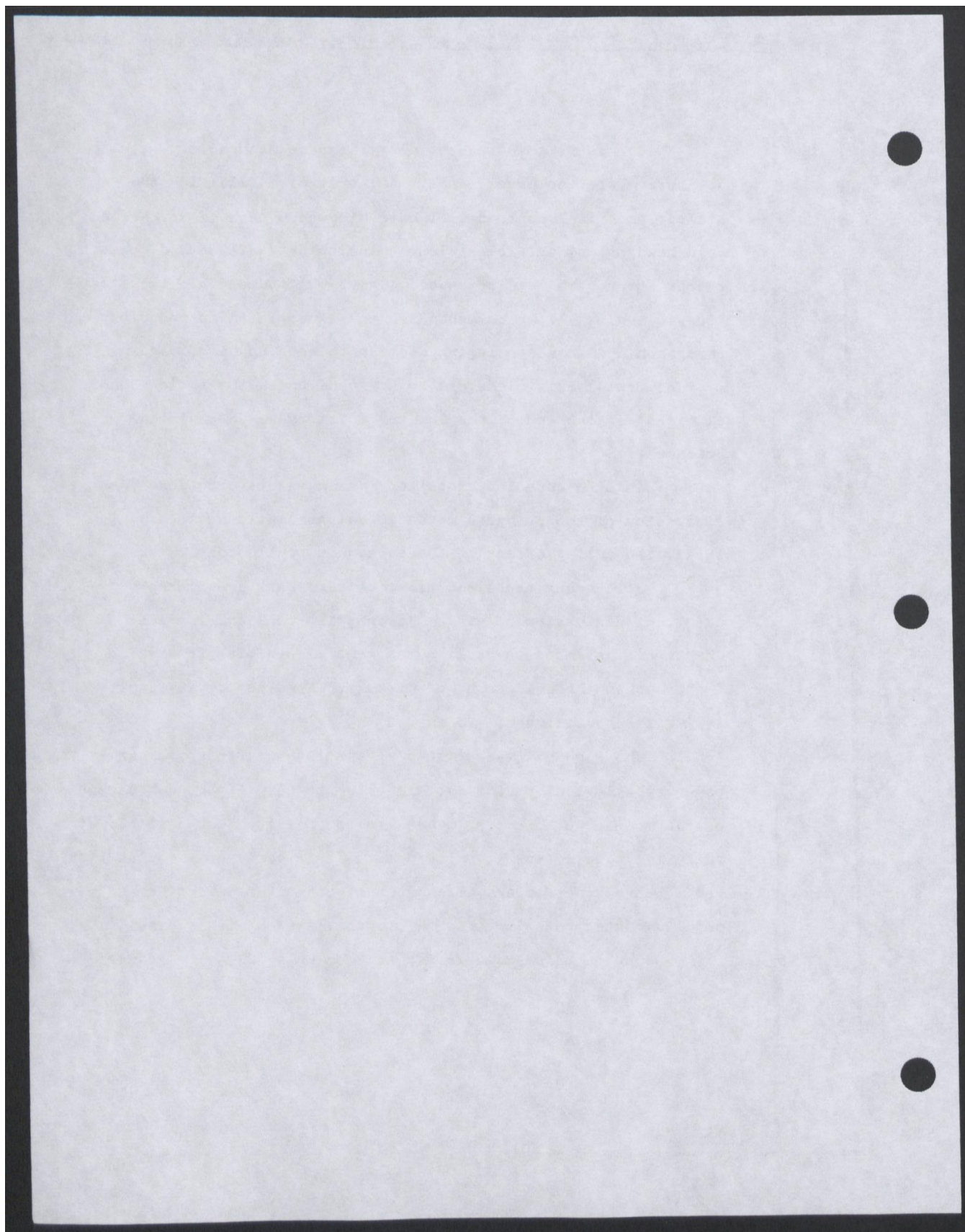
Since many excellent treatments of Kant's philosophy exist, my discussion of his philosophy is orthodox. My last Chapter is intended to explain the general position from which I approached the philosophy of history. Needless to say, this is a still tentative view-point.

The Appendix was written after listening to a seminar paper by a logical positivist, in order to clarify my own thought on the meaning of "meaning, and also to indicate what criteria of validity logic offers to philosophy. It is based on a course with Prof. Henry Scheffer and also personal consultations. The philosophical interpretation of the logical systems is my own.

Though this analysis was written as a unit, the reader

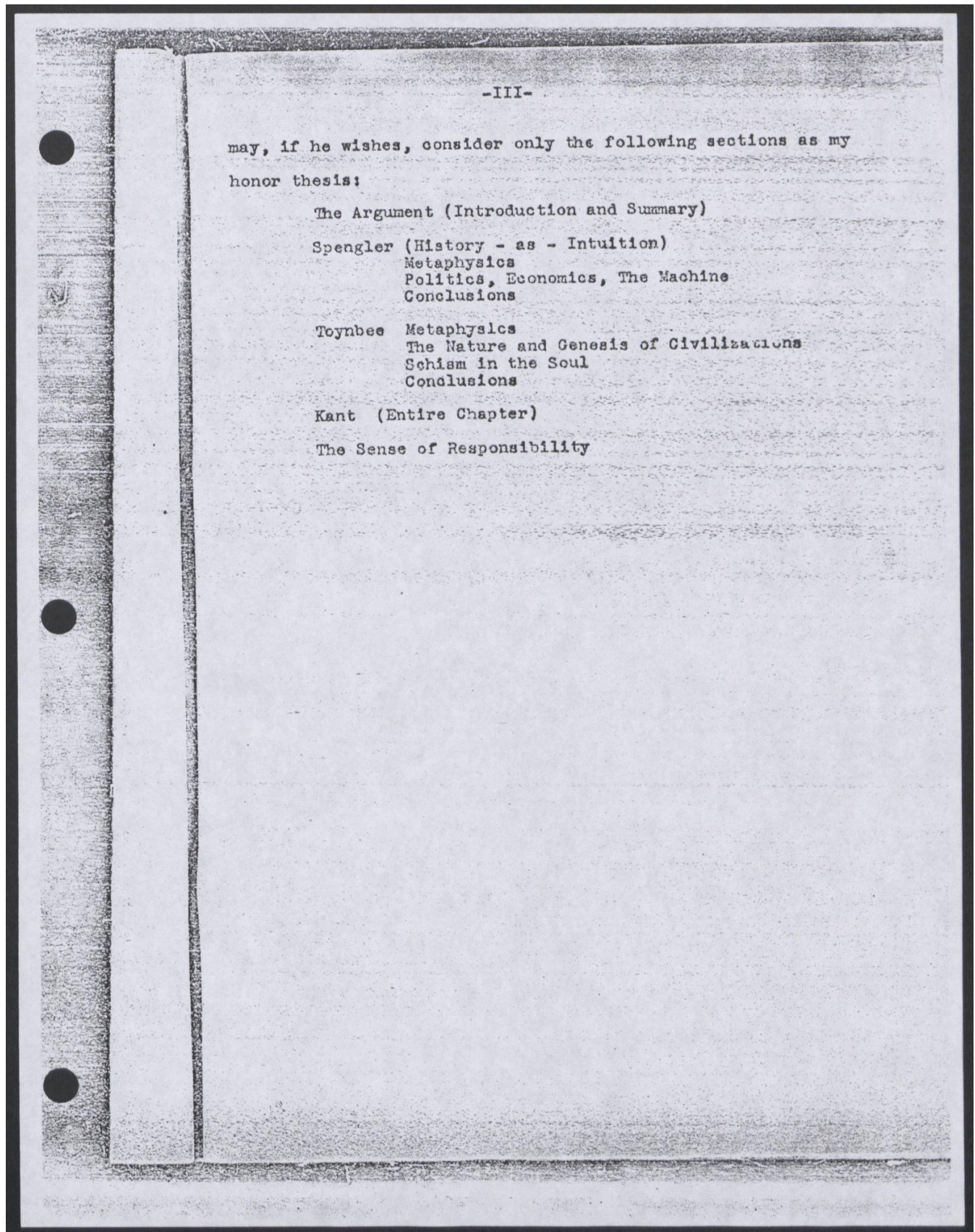
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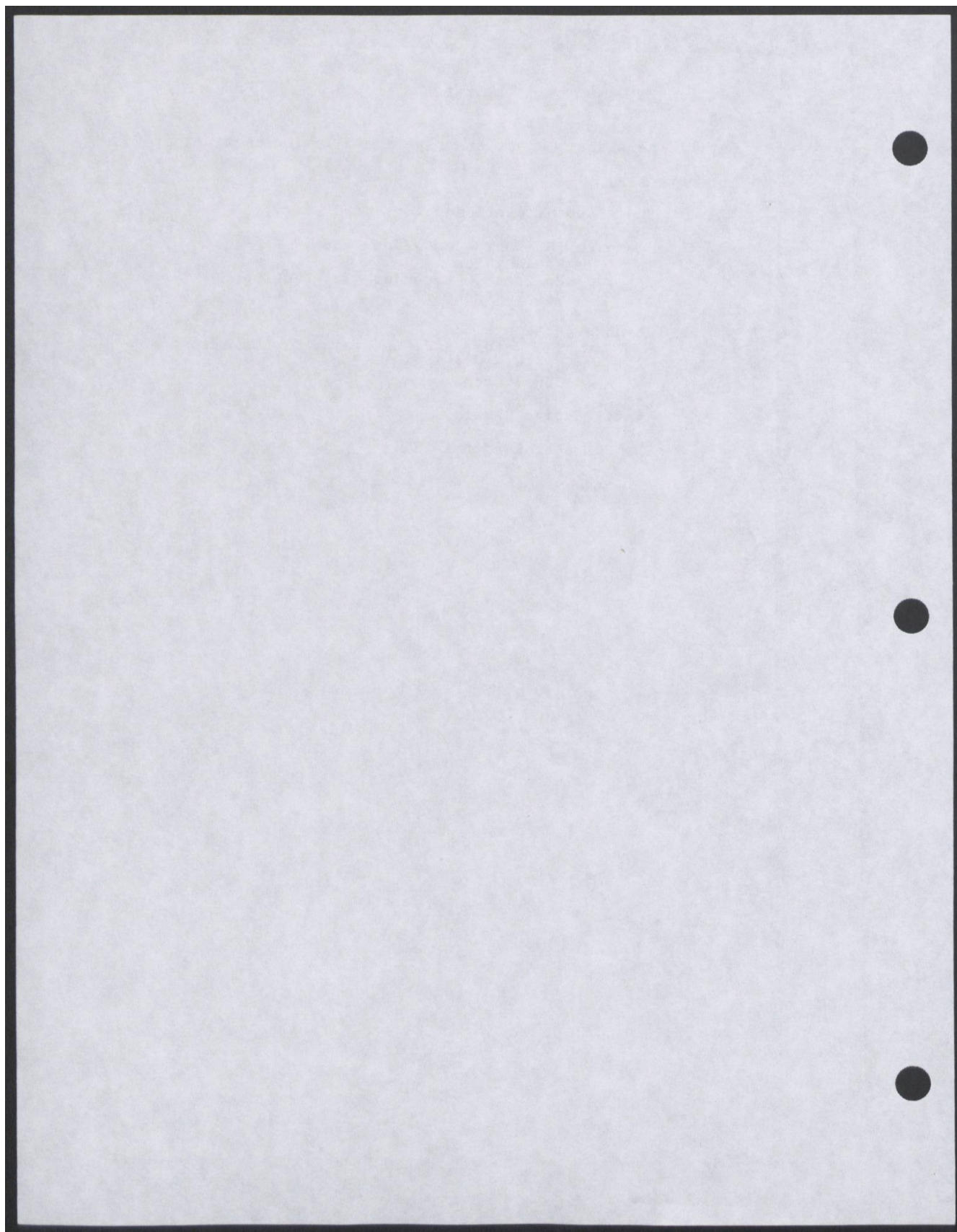
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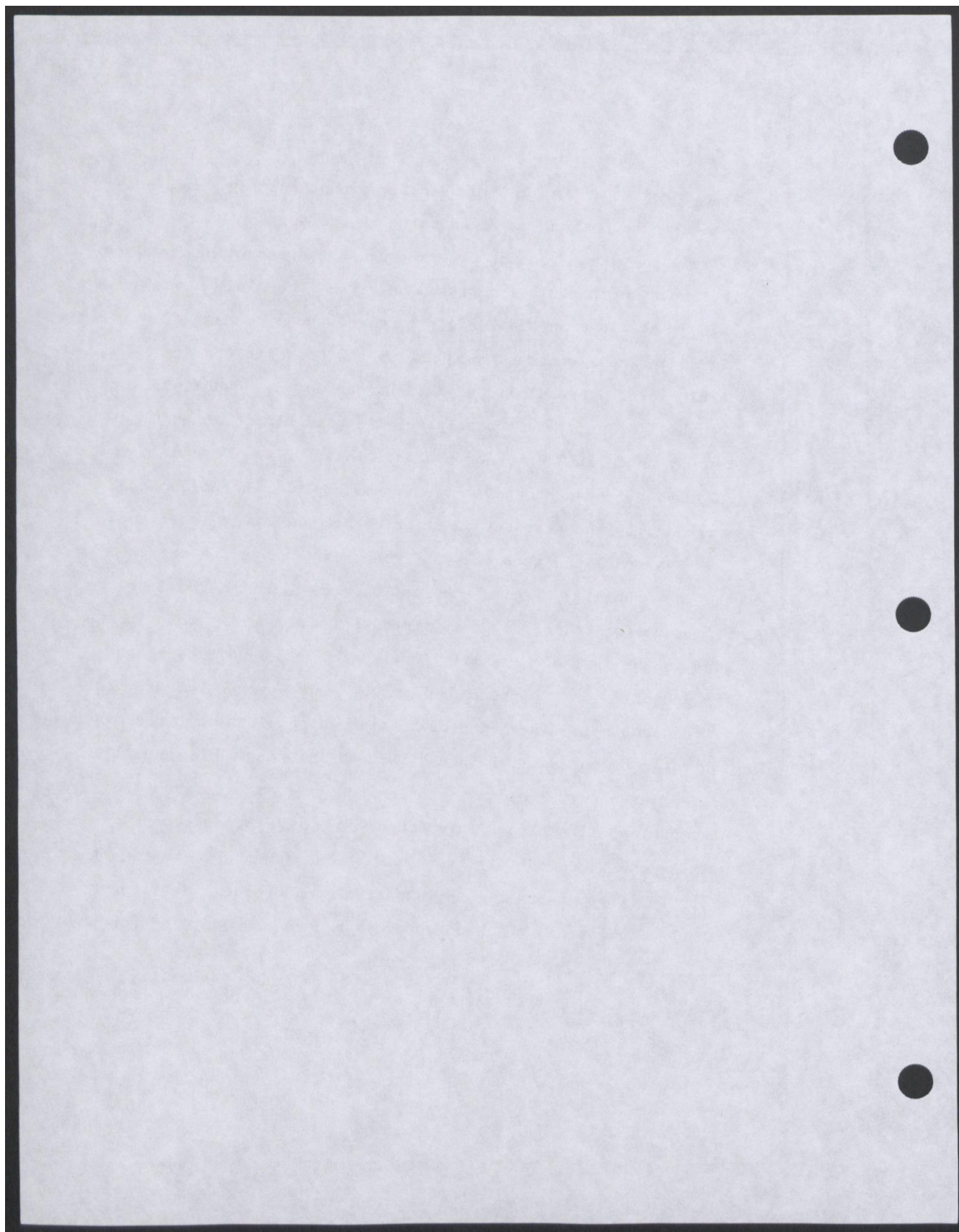
with necessity. The British sceptics, particularly Hume, submitted these notions to rigorous criticism and denied necessity as well as purposiveness. They argued that perception involves the impact of empirical entities on a wax-like mind, whose sensations of pleasure are largely passive, whose concept of necessity describe a constant conjunction and to which freedom is meaningless.<sup>1</sup> The limits of thought can not be established by thought, however. Hume's scepticism caused him to abandon philosophy while still a young man and Descartes was forced to invoke God as a guarantor of external reality with the aid of the very faculty the accuracy of which he had seriously questioned.<sup>2</sup>

Kant realized that only an inward experience can transcend the inexorability of completed action. He "limited knowledge to made room for belief." He affirmed that the reality that is subject to the laws of causality is given by sensuous experience and exhausted in the phenomenal world. But beyond that man has a transcendental experience of freedom which elevates him above the realm of necessity into a higher world-order which conditions all appearances. Freedom is an inward state, an attitude that accompanies all action. This disproves Hume's assertion that nothing can be definitely known, since one can always imagine the opposite of any thought. Our experience of freedom testifies to a fact of existence which no thought-process can deny and for the

1. See post. Ch. "History and Man's Experience of Morality."

2. See post. for full discussion Ch. "History and Man's Experience of Morality."

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demonstration of which Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* was not really necessary.<sup>1</sup> Whatever conception one may form about the inevitability of actions, their accomplishment occurred with an inward conviction of choice. Freedom is the causality that motivates man. "To conceive a man having no freedom is impossible except as a man deprived of life," says Tolstoy.

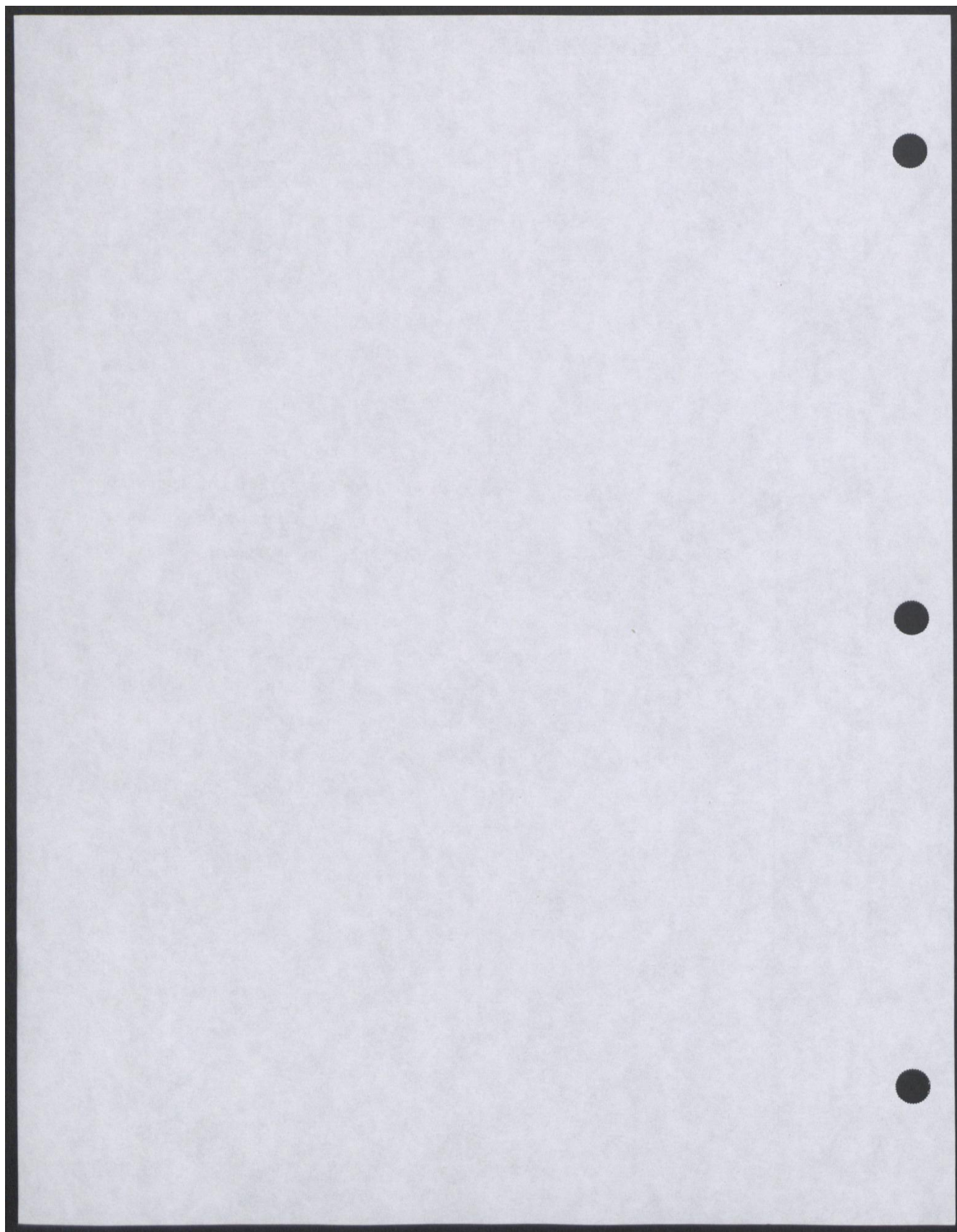
What is the solution to the paradox of irrevocable action accomplished with the conviction of choice? How can we reconcile the experience of freedom with our knowledge that our intentions so frequently issue forth into totally incommensurate consequences? What is the meaning of a causality that accomplishes itself under the mode of freedom?

The philosophy of history has addressed itself to these problems. It testifies to humanity's yearning to understand the fatedness of life, to a mystic drive for an absolute, to an attempt to give meaning to the basic questions of existence. For this reason the philosophy of history is indissolubly connected with metaphysics;<sup>2</sup> is indeed metaphysics of a very high order. The next

1. See post Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality.
2. For this reason I have avoided the usual classification of philosophies of history into cyclical and progress theories. It seems to me, that a classification in terms of metaphysical assumptions presents wider possibilities. Moreover, the philosophers discussed do not lend themselves well to such a classification. Toynbee combines the cyclical and the progress concepts. Spengler is a cyclical philosopher in Vico's tradition. Hent has a theory of progress, achieved by conflict which in its implications is very similar to Toynbee. (See post Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality).

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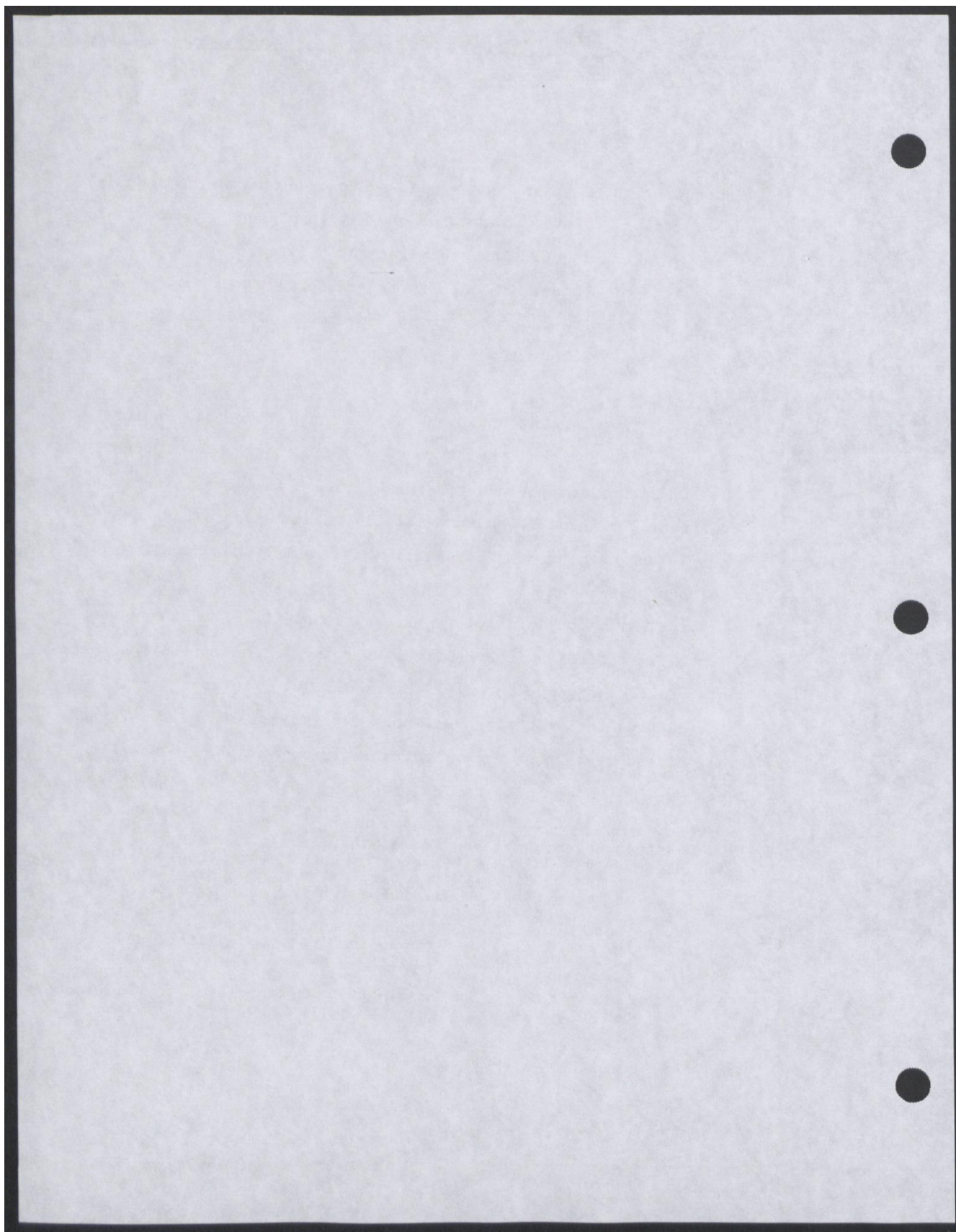
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section will examine whether history can in fact give an answer to these problems.

2. Is There a Meaning to History?<sup>1</sup>

History, according to Popper, has no meaning. It is the chronicle of international crime and mass murder and takes no account of the tears and suffering of mankind. It is up to us, however, he states at a later point,<sup>2</sup> to give meaning to history by assisting the open society to triumph in its eternal struggle with the closed society.

Aside from the inner contradiction of this argument, - for if history has no meaning, the eternal conflict between freedom and rationality against mysticism, historicism and tyranny can not be its motif - the passage illustrates the difficulty, and confusion, inherent in the word "meaning." It implies:

1. History has no meaning.

2. History has a meaning, but that meaning is unacceptable to Popper.

3. History has no meaning, but if freedom and rationality triumph, it will suddenly acquire content.

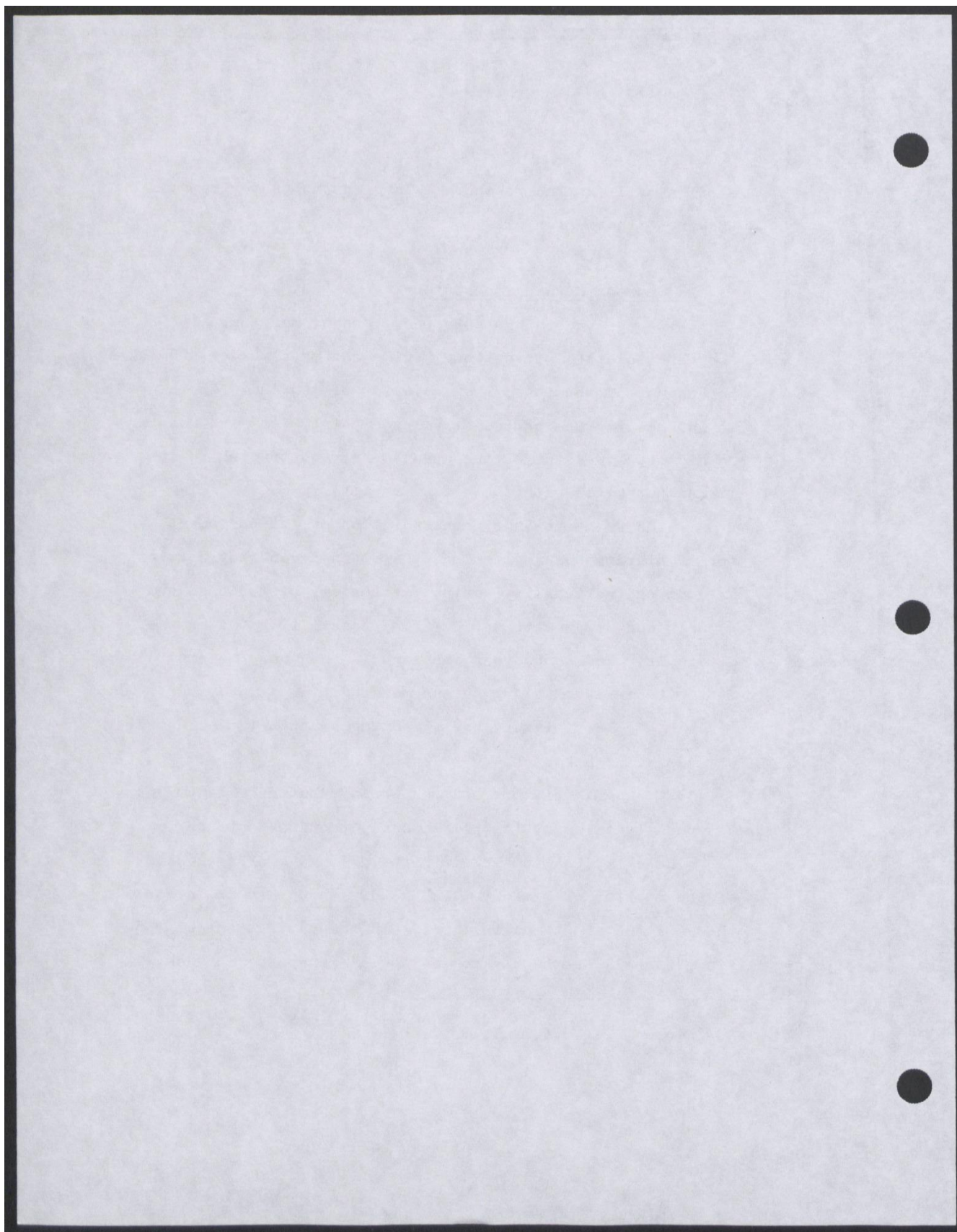
These implications contain the dilemma of the problem of the meaning of history. Is history an open book, a set of theorems that contains in itself all the aspirations of mankind, as well as the key to the world's purpose? Or does

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1. Popper - The Open Society and its Enemies Vol. 2 p. 256.  
2. Popper - Op.cit. Vol. 2 p. 264.

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history reveal a series of meaningless incidents, a challenge for our normative concepts, only through conformity to which it can obtain significance? Is meaning, in short, an attribute of reality or a metaphysical construction attendant on our recognition of significance?<sup>1</sup>

The logical positivists accept the former alternative. Meaning results from verifying statements with empirical facts. The researches of anthropologists have, however, dispelled the hope that the meaning of assertions could be given a firmer basis by making the physical world their criterion. It has been demonstrated that each culture and to a certain extent each individual constructs his own image of "reality", and that "facts" are in no manner as absolute and unshakeable as assumed. The history of modern physics moreover, has been a continuous process of dissolving external reality and laying bare such mysterious and incompatible prime data as energy that works under the aspect of mass, as light that is demonstrably a wave, but equally certainly contains all its physical properties in an elemental particle, the photon.

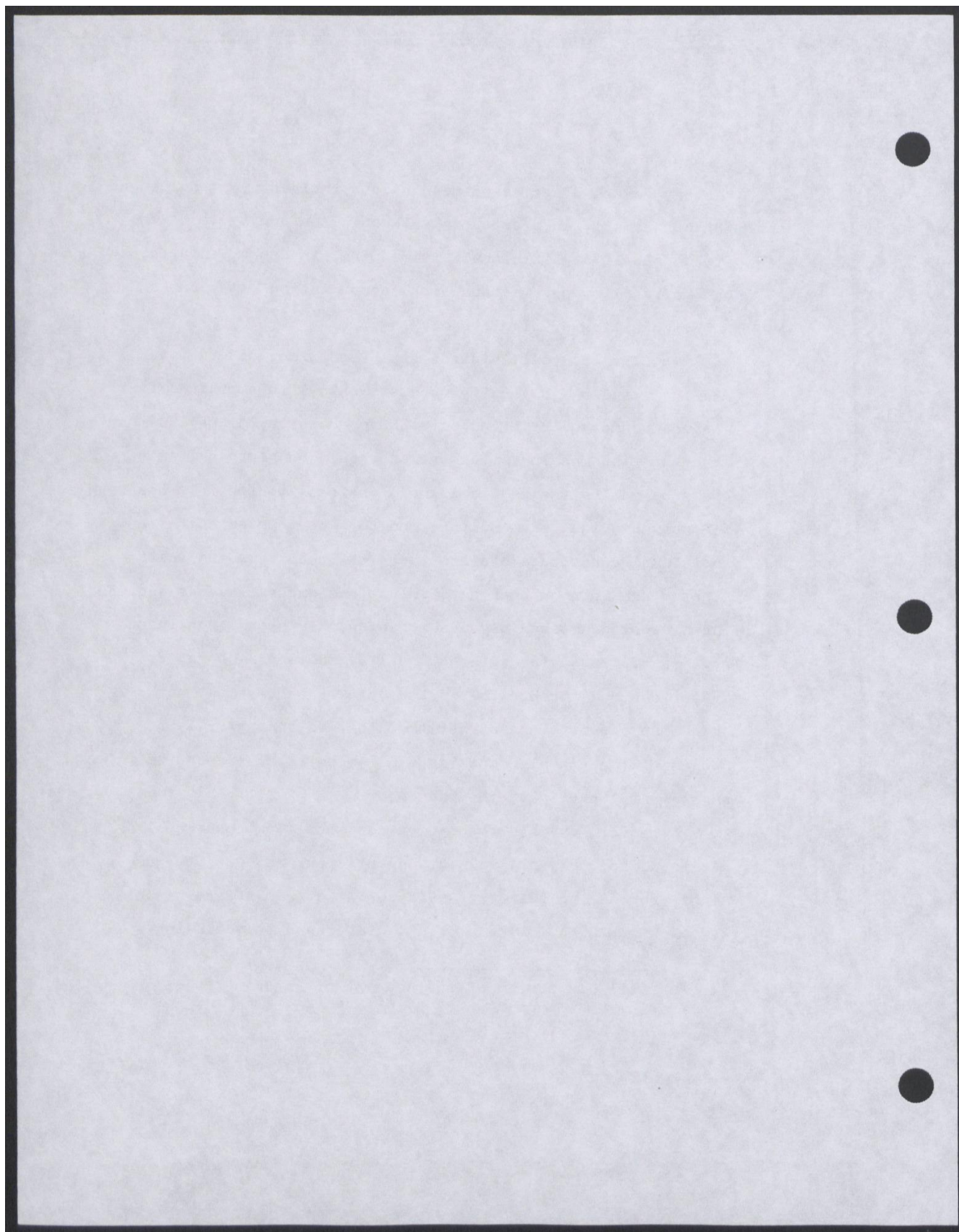
Moreover, on this theory, as classical logic has well realized, not only all value judgments, but all quality judgments are meaningless. The difference between affirming an object's worth, or its color, is a difference in achieving a

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1. For full discussion of the concept of "meaning" see Post Appendix A "The Concept of Meaning."

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consensus, but not of empirical verifiability.

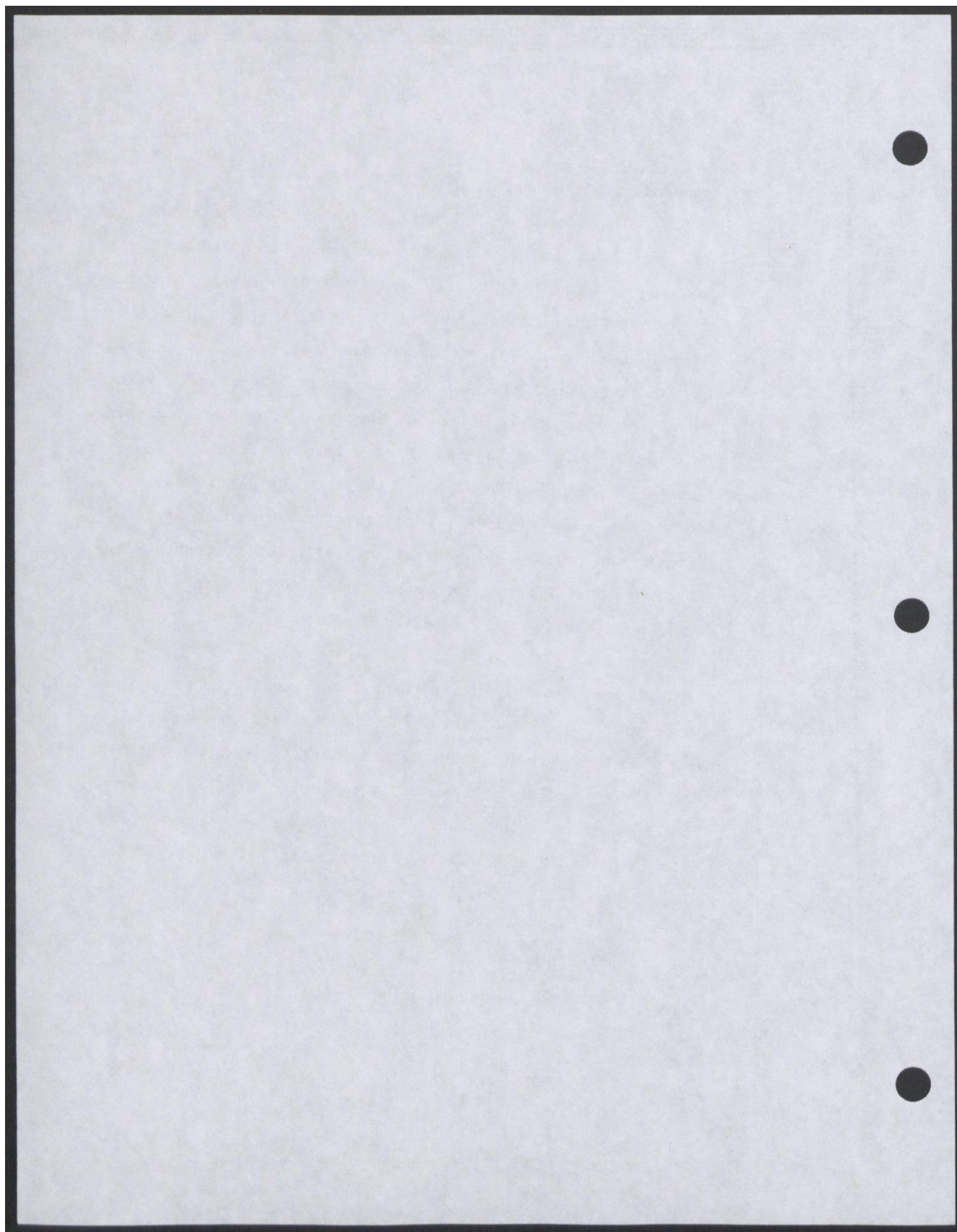
Traditional logic, at any rate, was better aware of this problem. In its concepts each proposition had as its subject ultimate reality.<sup>1</sup> A judgment, of which the proposition constitutes the expression in words, is the act of distinguishing a particular element, the predicate, in the being of a subject that could not be thought of unless it contained some other than the predicated character. The distinguishing characteristic of a judgment is its truth or falsity. However, and this is the cardinal point, only true judgments matter, for unless a man says what he does not really think he is affirming the truth of his assertion. All propositions, therefore, besides affirming or denying the predicate of a subject imply existence. Reality is thus implied by, not requisite for judgments.

The existential import theory of propositions presented too many difficulties, however. Though logicians could always argue that statements about square circles did not imply existence since they involved mutually exclusive terms, or contrast logical construction which only have a mode of being with real existence,<sup>2</sup> the reconciliation of definitional reality and all possible judgments proved impossible.

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1. Joseph - Introduction to logic -p. 166.
  2. Russell - Principles of Mathematics - p. 449.

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Sentential logic abandoned the concept of the existential import of propositions. Its logical primitive is a sentence, which exhibits but a grouping together of symbols which in their general characteristics represent but empirical entities. Only by being brought into relation with other physical objects, facts, do these sentences acquire meaning. Since a determination of truth and falsity obviously does not precede every statement, sentential logic was forced to invoke another predicate of propositions, truth-weight. This, however, is a purely psychological relation.

But even this theory stumbled on the problem of just what constituted a fact and on the difficulty of reconciling truth-value and weight. Russell, in his later writings, and Prof. Scheffer,<sup>2</sup> have achieved a formulation which attempts to give the greatest possibility of determining the essence of meaning. Statements become replies to pure hypotheses which, moreover have to be endorsed by the proper criterion. The statement "Scott is the author of Waverly" is the affirmative answer, empirically endorsed, to the questions:

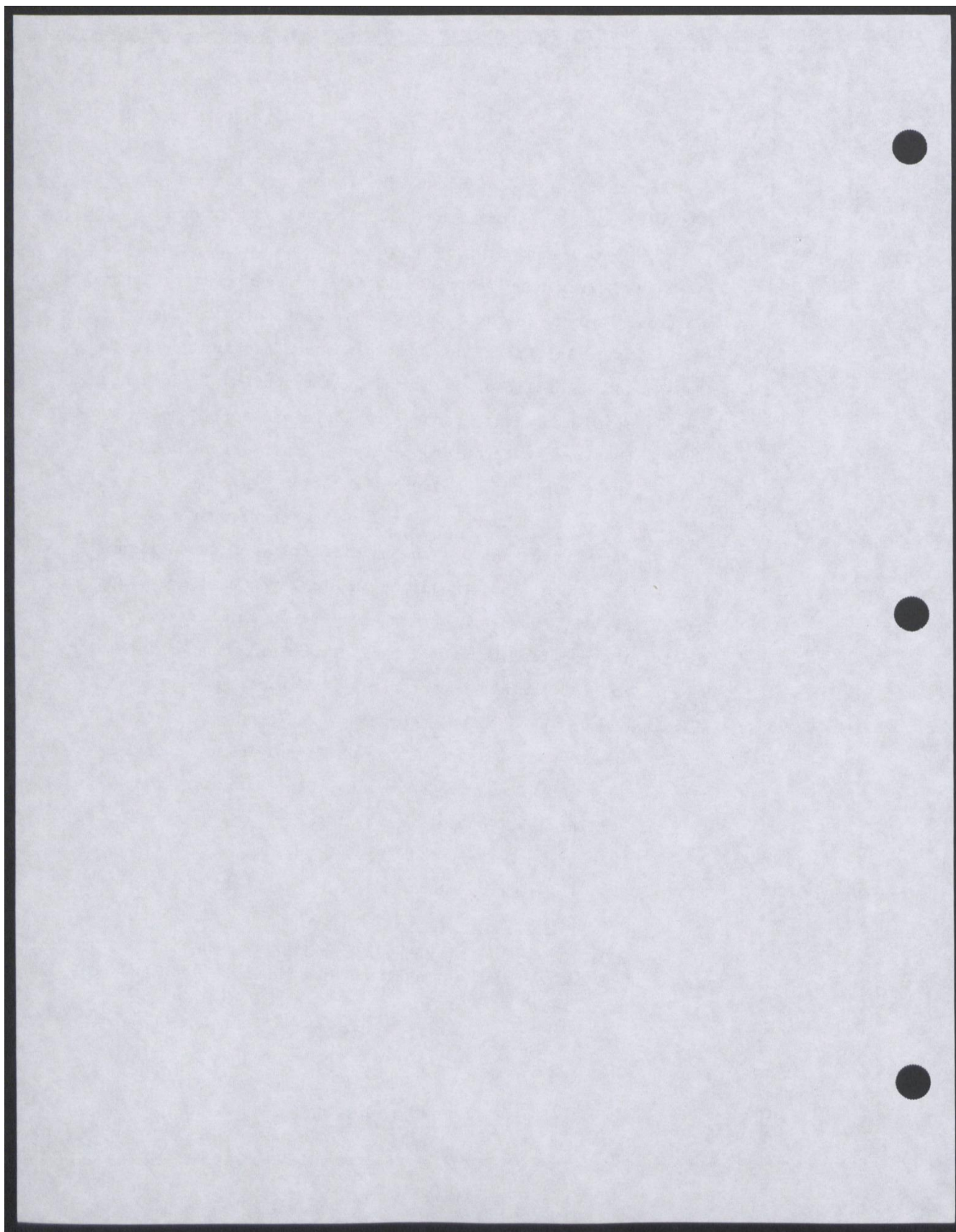
1. Did at least one man write Waverly?
2. Did only one Man write Waverly?
3. Was this man Scott?

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1. Based on Reichenbach "Experience and Prediction."  
2. Prof. Scheffer has not published his theory. (See Preface).

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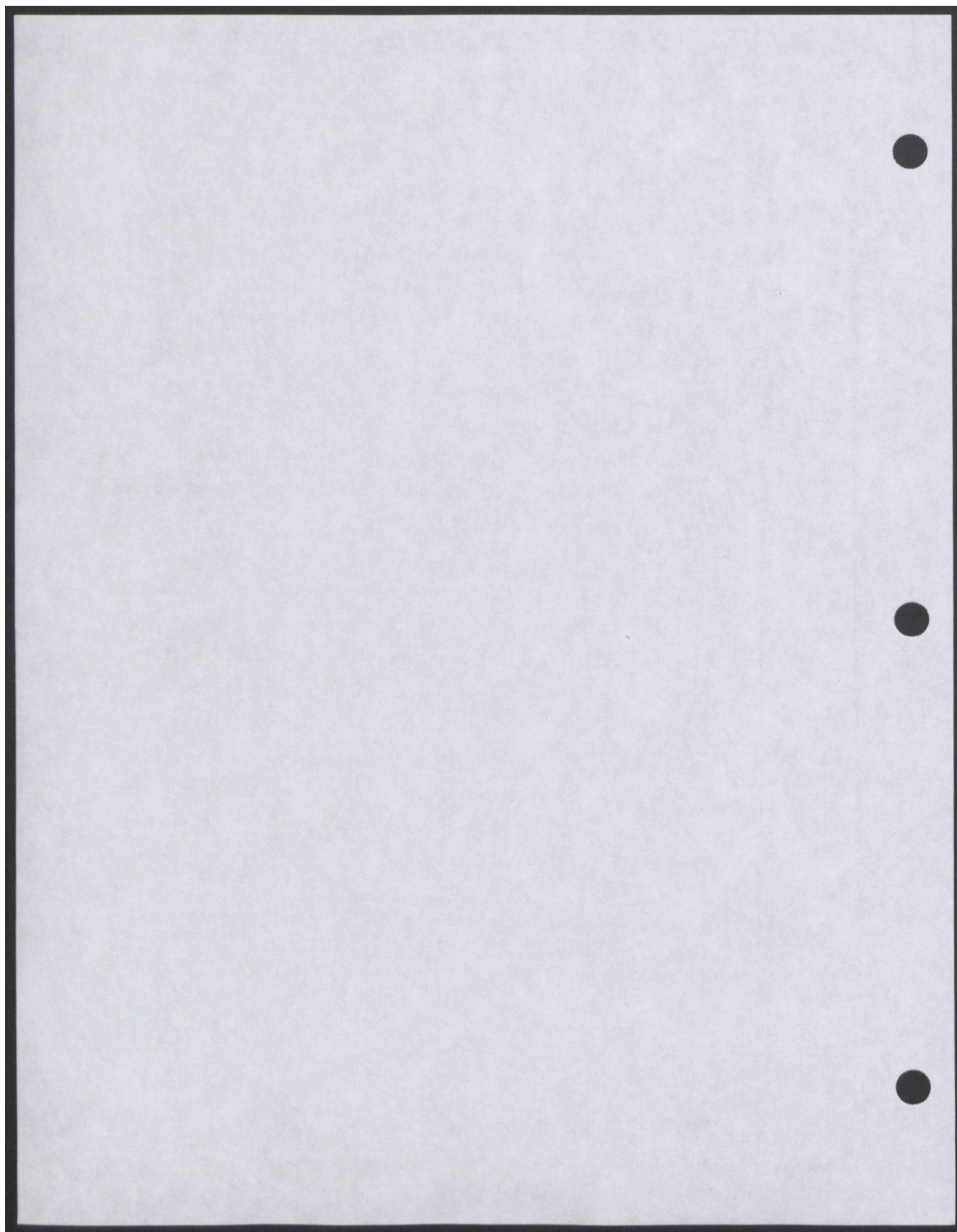
The range of meaningful propositions is, however, not exhausted by the empirical realm. Proper criteria can be obtained for value theorems or esthetic judgments. This theory recognizes the variability of metaphysical assumptions as a condition of meaning. Meaning becomes the function of three factors: the logical expressed in the most precise formulation of the hypothesis, the psychological inherent in the act of judging, the philosophical expressed in the endorsement.<sup>1</sup> Universality depends on the consensus which this ascription of meaning enjoys and not in the first instance on its empirical verifiability.

Thus meaning represents the emanation of a metaphysical context. Just as every man in a certain sense creates his picture of the world, just as the scientist can find in nature only what he puts in it in the formulation of his hypothesis, just as every question determines at least the range of answers, so history does not exhibit the same portent to everybody but yields only the meanings inherent in the nature of our query. Therefore, too, the philosophy of history is inseparable from metaphysics, and involves a deep awareness of the mysteries

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1. The endorsement in turn is composed of a metaphysical (the criterion) and an epistemological (the assertion, not the judgment of truth and falsity) element. See post - Appendix - The Concept of Meaning.

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and possibilities not only of nature but of human nature. In the reaction of the various thinkers to the problems of human necessity and human freedom, in their capacity to experience depths inaccessible to reason alone, lies the answer to the meaning of history. Therefore Popper's statement that history presents merely a chronicle of crime and murder, with no awareness of the heartbreak of humanity, reveals his normative concepts but does not represent a necessary attribute of events. That other levels of meaning exist, is shown by Dostojevski and Schweitzer, Homer and Shakespeare to whom history was a deeply felt experience of transcendental import.<sup>1</sup>

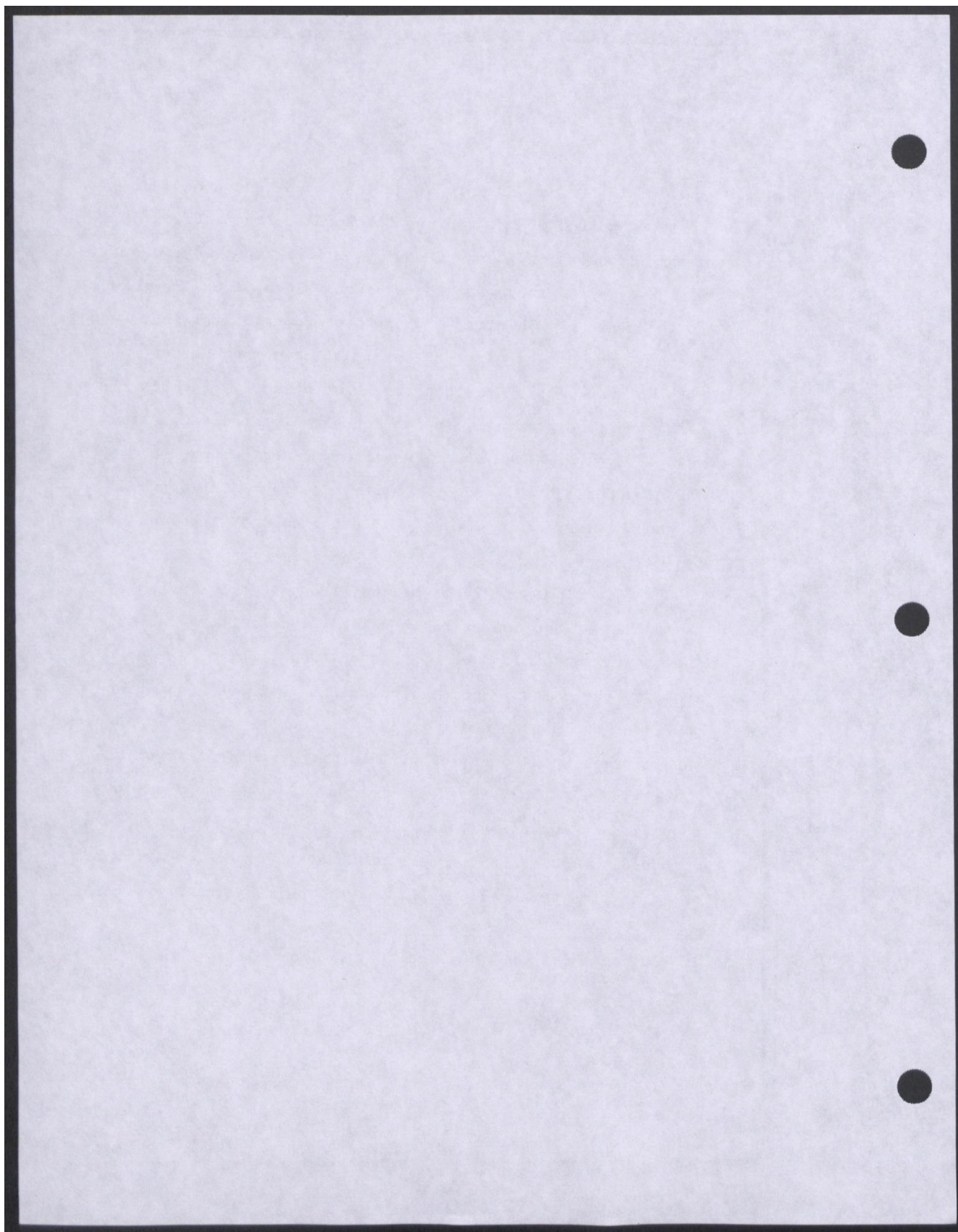
Who is right then? Is history the self-realization of the spirit of freedom as Hegel held? Or does it represent the growth and decline of organic cultures, their essence a mystery, their moving force longing and their manifestation power as Spengler argued? Is there a deeper purpose in all this emergence and decay of civilizations, a realization of salvation by faith as Toynbee implies? Does history amount to no more than eternal recurrence, the stage for the Man who surpasses himself of Nietzsche or does it reveal the drama of a divine plan, gradually unfolding and culminating in universal

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1. See on this point, Alfred Weber. Farewell to European History.

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peace, as Kant asserts?<sup>1</sup>

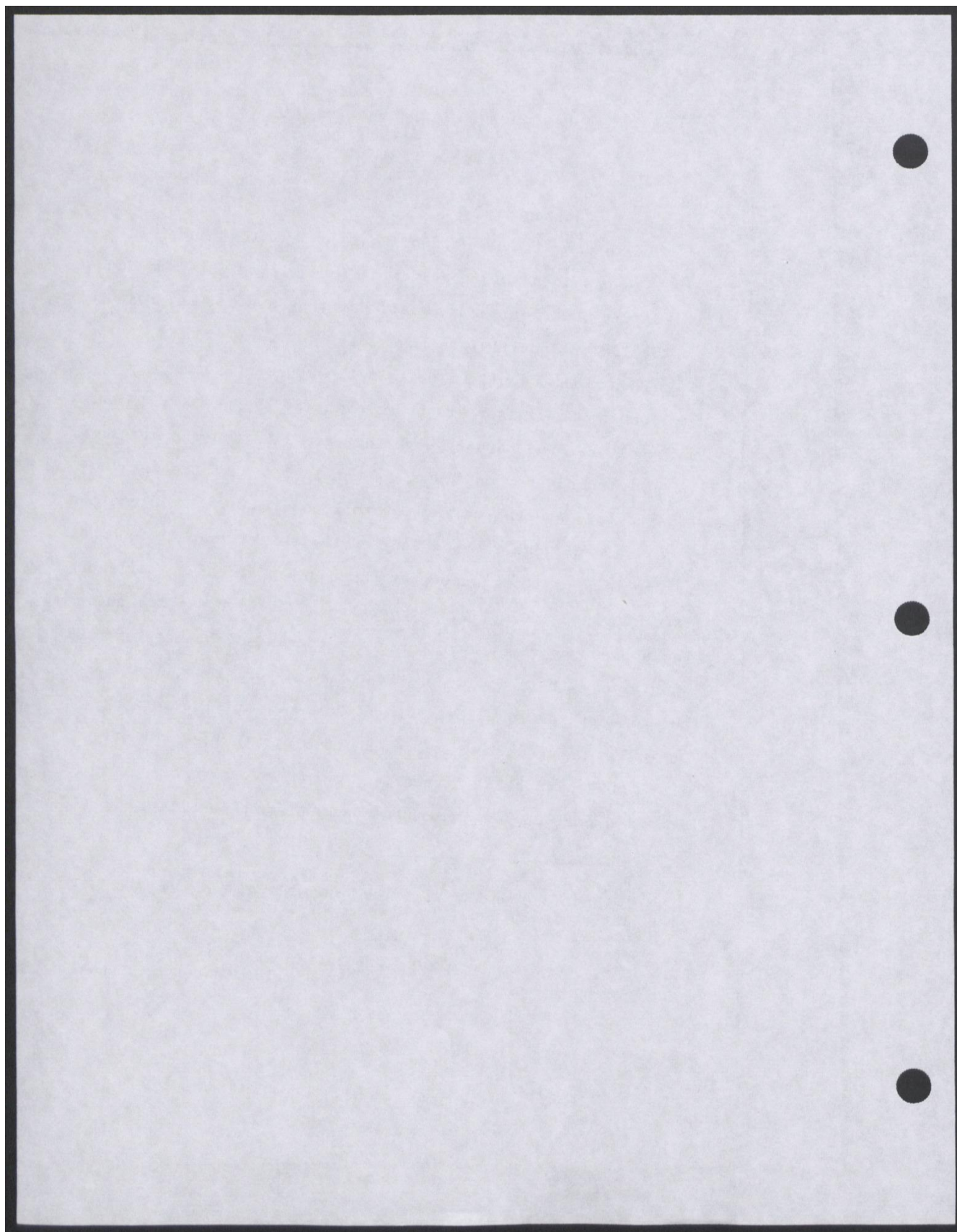
If meaning is the metaphysical context that ascribes significance does this preclude differentia by which to judge validity? These criteria exist, but they are not as obvious as the logical positivists assumed.

Though the questions delimit the range of answers, we can require the answers to be relevant to the problem. Though each culture, and perhaps each individual interprets his data in an intensely personal way, we can insist that the data be adhered to.<sup>2</sup> We can analyse internal consistency. On another level we can judge the adequacy of the thinker's philosophical assumptions by their scope, by their grasp of the totality of life, instead of just its appearances.<sup>3</sup> Newton sitting under the apple tree might have correctly concluded that apples fall when ripe. It is not a question of right or wrong, therefore, but of depth and shallowness. It does not suffice to show logically deduced theorems, as an absolute test of validity. There must also exist a relation to the pervasiveness of an inward experience which transcends phenomenal reality. For

1. Kant did not ascribe the self-realization of peace to a divine plan, but to a natural unfolding. The implication, just as in Spinoza, is however of a divine order in the cosmos.
2. See post: Appendix A. The Concepts of Meaning.
3. This, however, involves utilization of another set of assumptions. See post Appendix A - The Concepts of Meaning.

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though man is a thinking being, it does not follow that his being exhausts itself in thinking. The ultimate mysteries of life are perhaps not approachable by dissection, but may require the poet's view who grasps the unity of life, which is greater than any, however painstaking analysis of its manifestations.

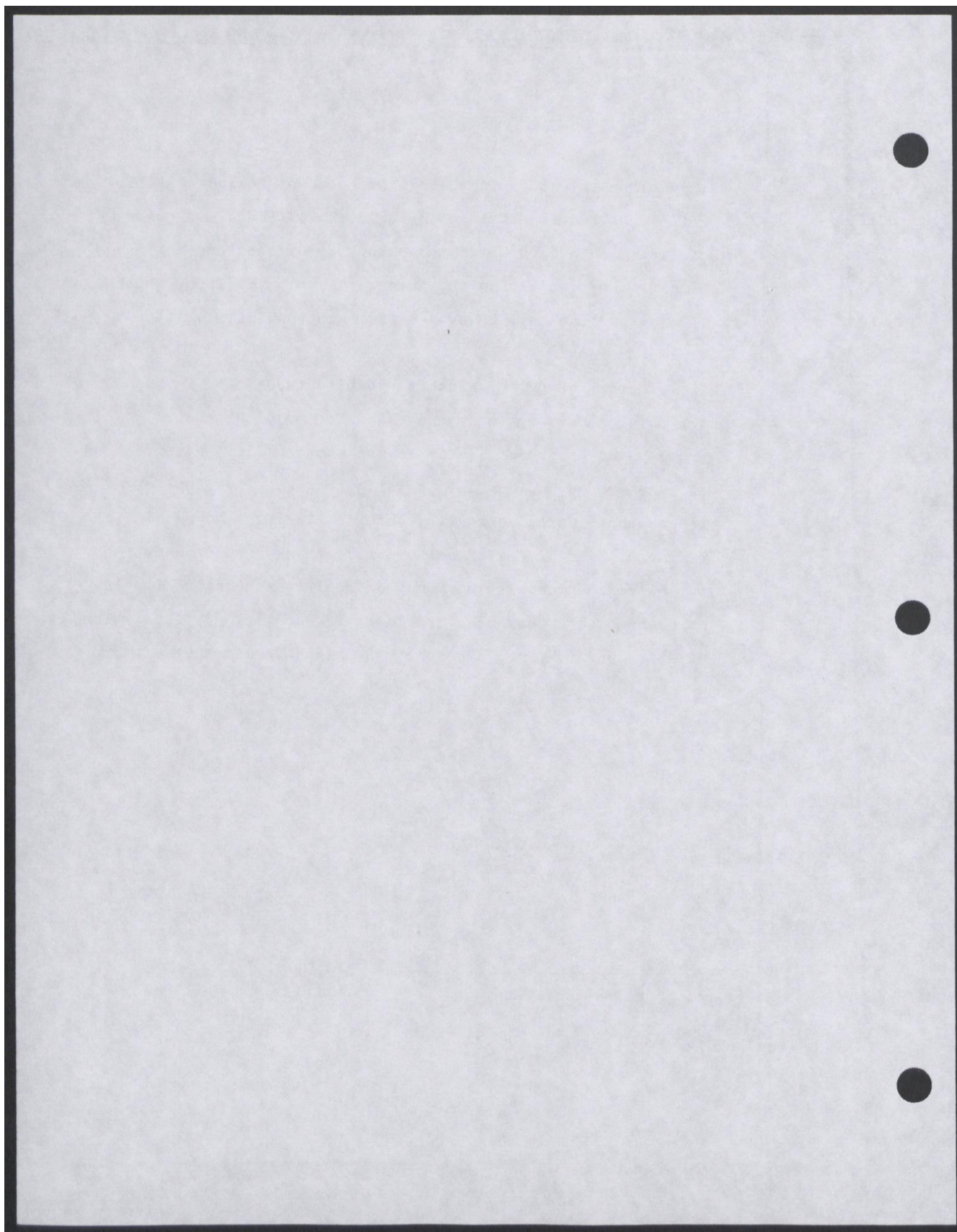
The Philosophy of History exhibits therefore, in its metaphysical assumptions an attitude towards the basic problems of existence. They reveal whether life is approached with reverence and humility or with the assertive tool of a reason that admits no reality outside itself. The resolution of the dilemma of historical events serving as the condition for a transcendental experience or reality exhausting itself in phenomenal appearances discloses the ethical predispositions<sup>1</sup> of a personality, not a property of historical data.

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1. See post Ch: The Sense of Responsibility.

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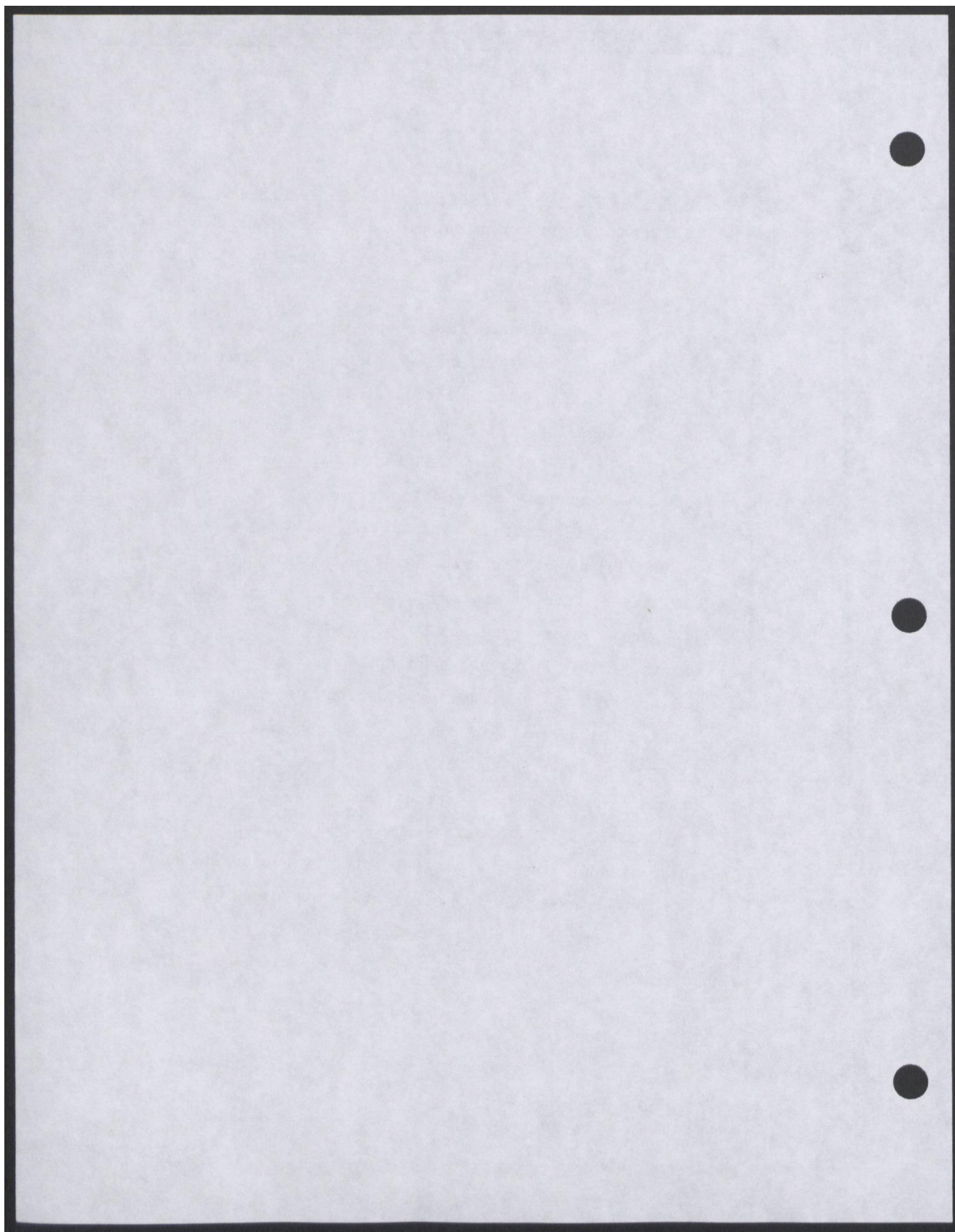
The Philosophy of History as a Reflection of Basic Attitudes

Birth is the beginning of death, life the process of mortality. Everything existing is modified by time, history exhibits the unfolding of growth, fulfillment and outward decay. Man strives for knowledge and having attained it can not bear it. All of literature contains an expression of this dilemma and of mankind's lament at the shortness of their lot. Hamlet becomes paralysed by knowledge, Achilles purchases it at the price of his death. Thus is the appearance of life but not necessarily its meaning.

The magic attitude towards life seeks to escape the transitoriness of its existence by conjuring its data. It attempts to find in history the necessary realization of its purposive concepts, to be classified as attributes of events. But purpose represents the emanation of a metaphysical context not a necessary deduction from phenomena. No ethical value can be ascribed to the mere survival which history exhibits. For this reason the magic attitude develops a philosophy of eternal recurrence, as a condition for its cognition. Death becomes the result of fulfillment, life exhibits merely mortality, history represents a machine continually re-producing new manifestations of power. Values are, at best, a mode of causality. The mystery of life is limited by classifiable data; it exhausts itself in the riddle

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of the first cause. The fact of occurrence reveals the only  
criterion of inward fitness.<sup>1</sup>

The prayerful attitude, on the other hand, experiences life as a vision of reconciliation as one views a vast plain from a mountain top when the haze obscures the countryside and everything merges in a total impression of peace and harmony. The inevitability exhibited to retrospection attains a deeper meaning through a transcendental experience. The recognition of necessity becomes the condition for the attainment of inward liberation. Resignation as to the purposes of the universe serves as the first step towards ethical activity and the realization ensues that the meaning of history is not confined to its mere manifestations and that no causal analysis can absolve Man from giving his own content to his own existence.<sup>2</sup>

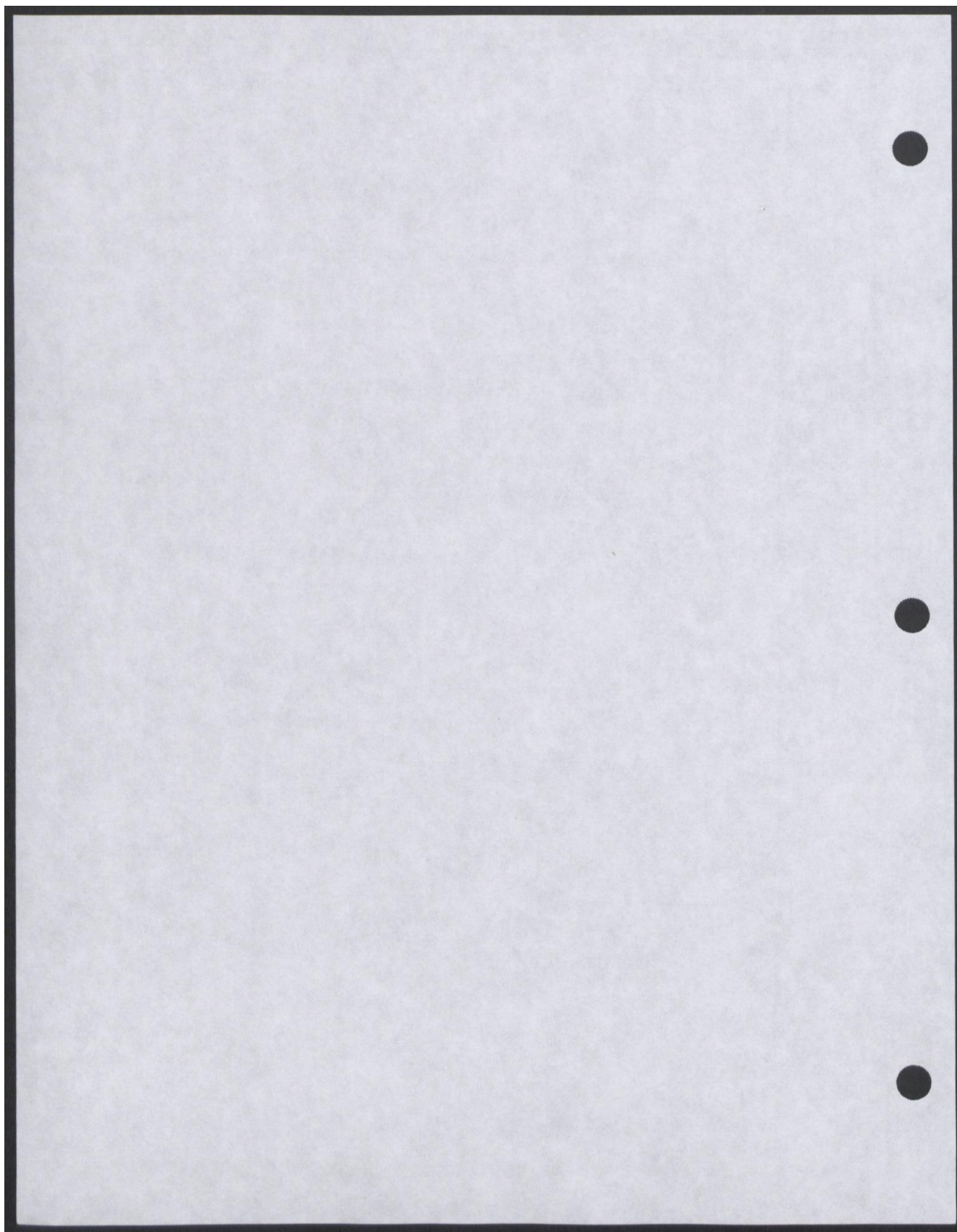
The philosophies of Spengler, Toynbee and Kant contain expressions of these attitudes in the quest for the apprehension of the meaning of history.

Spengler asserted that progress was not a category of meaning for history. Life contains the problem of motion,

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1. See discussion of Ch III "Toynbee."
  2. See post - Ch - "The Sense of Responsibility." See also Schweitzer "The Philosophy of Civilization."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 40

**Image ID:** 15212829



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 41

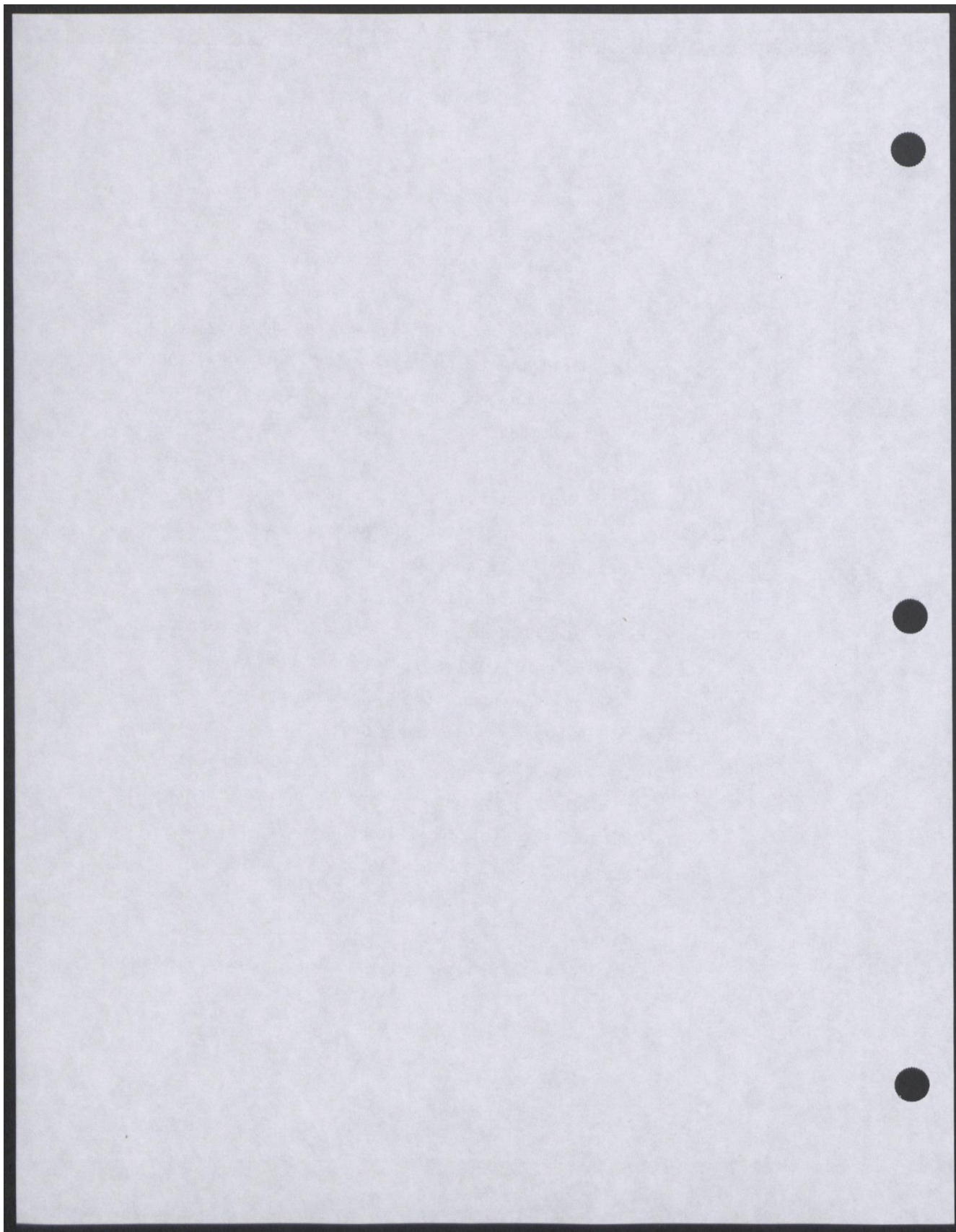
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which results from the irrevocability of our actions and prevents us in the eternal flux of things to ever observe that which is in the act of observing itself, to ever causally determine the inner connectedness of events. This directedness of life is the source of the dual qualities of world-longing and world-dread that arises from our consciousness of mortality and our loneliness in a world in which we can never grasp the total inner meaning of others. The riddle of time opens up for Man, not to be classified as a category of Reason as Kant attempted. Space is a conception, but time represents a denotation for something inconceivable. It expresses itself in the eternal becoming that is the essence of Man and that attains pure being - pure space - only at the moment of his death. Causality applies to the stiff-forms of being; Destiny, fate dominate becoming. Destiny answers the question of when causality of how. All of life is permeated by an inner destiny that can never be defined, history discloses a majestic unfolding that one can only intuitively perceive, never causally classify. Existence constitutes a mystic relationship to the extended, especially accessible to the artist and the great statesman, the mystery and the essence of which each culture perceives in a different fashion.

And what does Spengler see with this intuitive vision?

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 42  
**Image ID:** 15212831



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"A boundless mass of human Beings, flowing in a stream without banks; up-stream a dark past wherein our time-sense loses all powers of definition and restless or uneasy fancy conjures up geological periods to hide away an eternally unsolvable riddle, down-stream a future even so dark and timeless"<sup>1</sup> - such is Spengler's view of human history. Over this surface there suddenly emerge the forms of the great cultures, organic beings with their own inner necessity and their deep logic of becoming. They go through all the stages of organic life, youth, maturity, decline and old age. Their youth is a period of infinite yearning in which every action is an augury of things to come and in which art, philosophy and politics unconsciously embody the cosmic best. In the gradual maturity of growth the mystery of life is dissipated, its problems answered, the questions thought through, the great form lost. Irrevocably over the bodies of a humanity that can no longer but accept, Caesarism approaches embodying itself in all the traditional trappings of life. Humanity flows into cities and amidst bread and circuses, amidst a repetition of cataclysmic wars the civilization petrifies and dies.

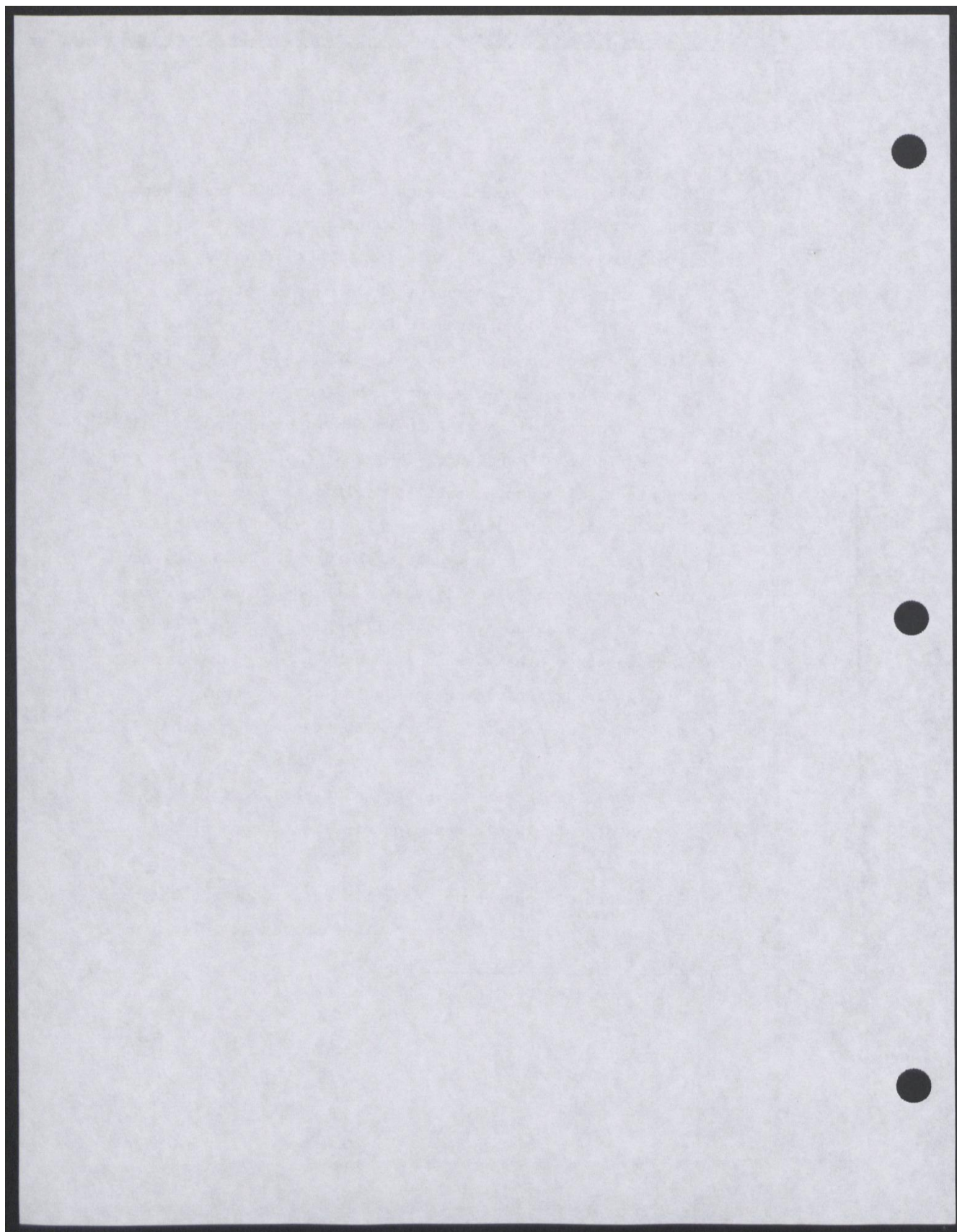
Therewith disappears not only its outward power, but also its inner meaning, of which each culture constructs its own

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1. Spengler - The Decline of the West - Volume 1. p.105.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 44

**Image ID:** 15212833



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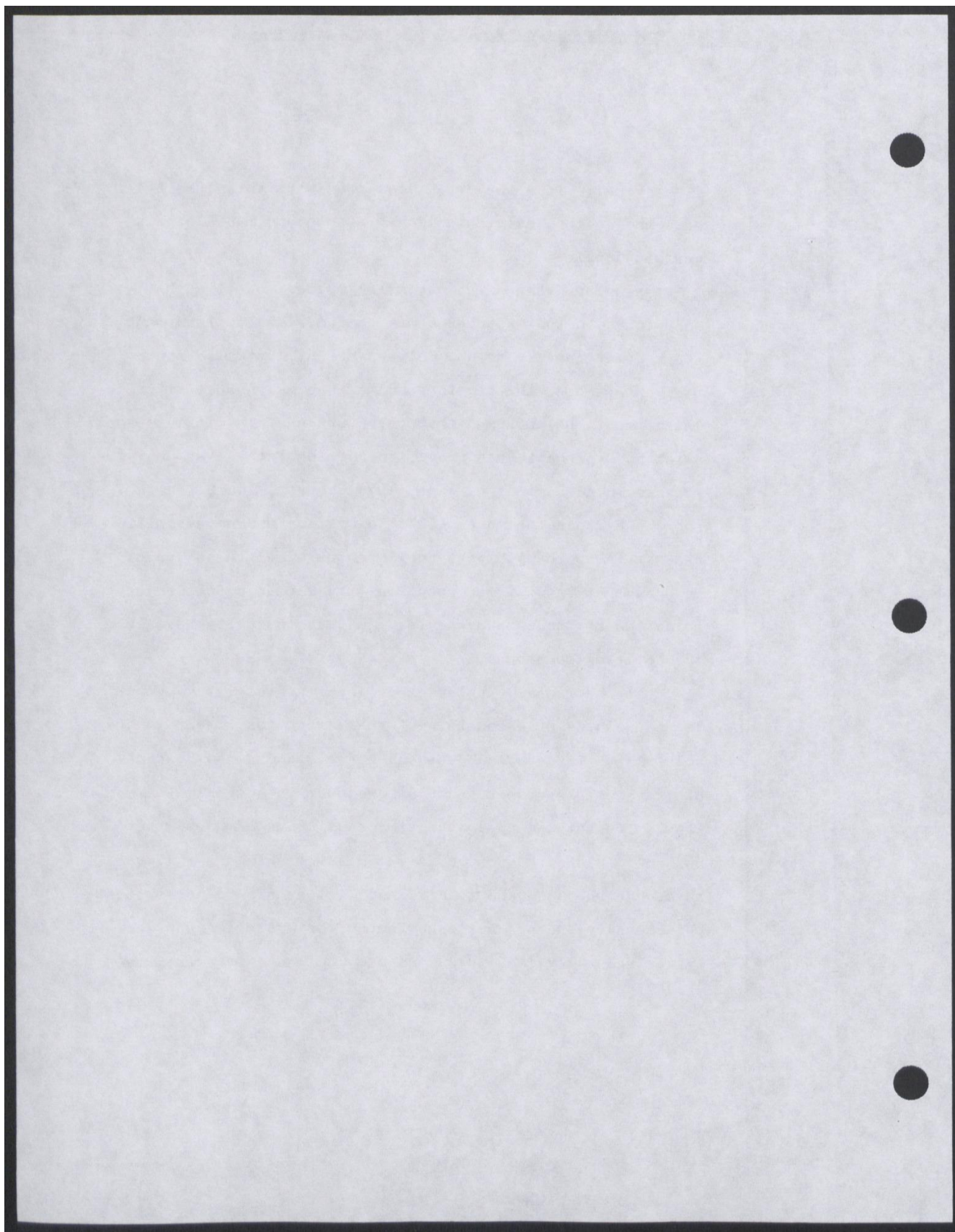
life-symbol. Thus the Greek Gods died with the Classical soul and so the Western World has started on its slow but certain decline.

Spengler grasped the essential mystery of life that Kant found in the experience of freedom. He realized that every event represents not only an effect, but also an inward experience, the key to results incommensurable with our intentions. He affirmed that there are certain ultimate goals, which no hypothesis can prove, and no sophistry ever deny, expressed in such words as hope, love, beauty, luck, fear. These are the symbols that are veiled in mystery and no definition can get in touch with what feel when we utter these words. He knew that intuitive perception (the German *erfuehlen*) contains the key to some mysteries, just as causality reveals the solution to others.

Yet what does Spengler experience in history? An endless unfolding of a cosmic beat that expresses itself in the sole alternatives of subject and object, a vast succession of catastrophic upheavals of which power is not only the manifestation but the exclusive aim; a stimulus of blood that not only pulses through veins but must be shed and will be shed. He feels in short only what history also demonstrates phenomenally; he has not experienced the mysteries and thereby derived a level of transcendence, he has solved them and

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 46

**Image ID:** 15212835



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will see in that solution history's only meaning.<sup>1</sup>

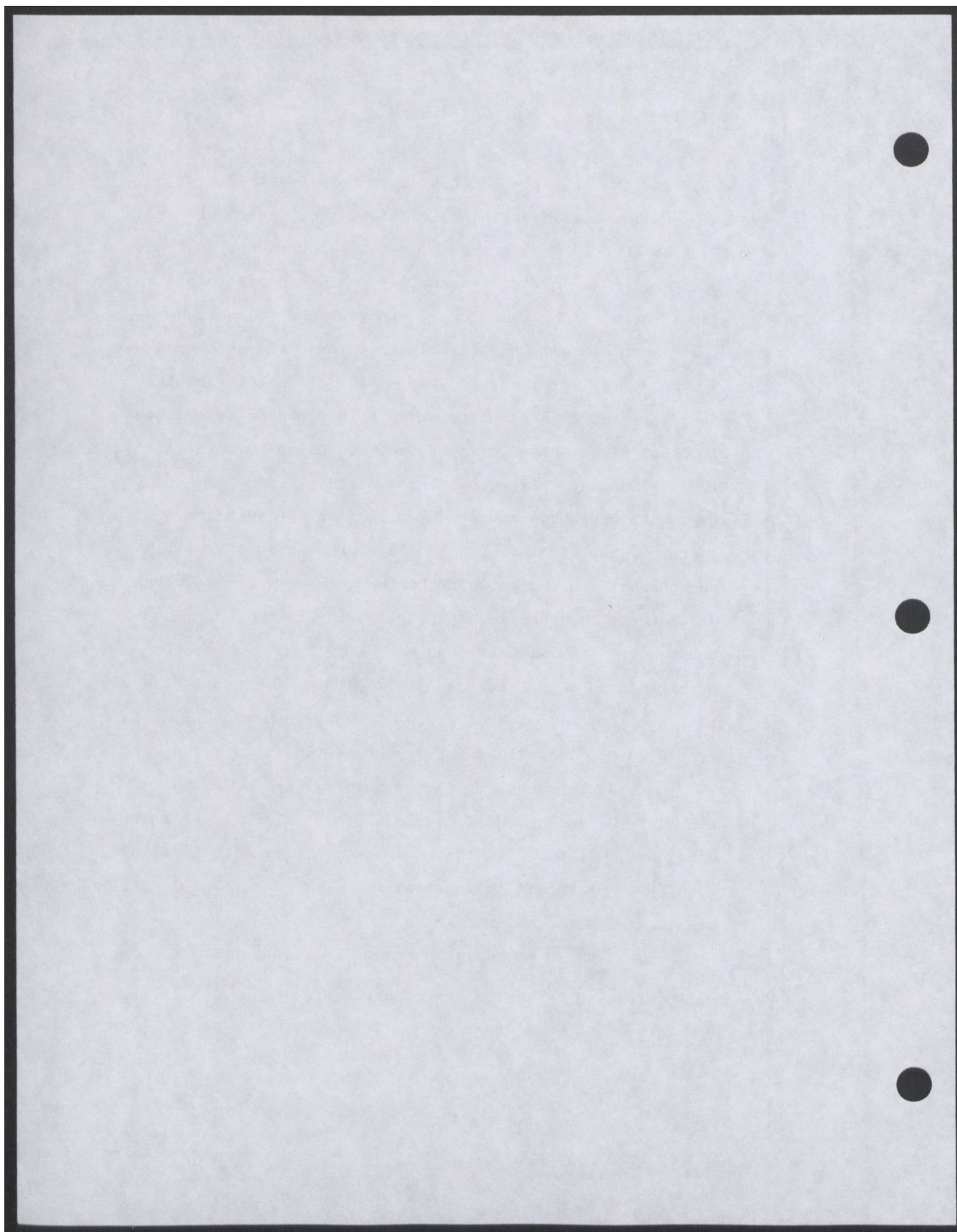
".....<sup>2</sup>Everything is determined," the devil tells Ivan Karamazoff "and humanity is settled forever. But as, owing to man's inveterate stupidity this can not come about for at least a thousand years, everyone who recognizes the truth even now may legitimately order his life as he pleases, on the new principles. In that sense 'all things are lawful' for him. What's more, even if this period never comes to pass, since there is anyway no God and no immortality, the new man may well become the man-god....."

This discloses the true implications of Spengler's position, the dilemma of which is expressed in this striking phrase: "In the world of history the Roman caused the Galilean to be crucified - that was his Destiny. In the other world (of Causality and morality) Rome was cast for perdition and the Cross became the pledge of Redemption - that was the Will of God."<sup>3</sup> But the Cross on the hills of Jerusalem has long disappeared, the temple is in ruins, and the Roman legions are not even a memory. Yet on roadsides all over the world, in the souls of whole civilizations the Cross still stands. Is that all that is implied by destiny then, this death and that Cross?

1. This analysis holds true only if one interprets Spengler's philosophy as embodying norms of activity. Though this is the usual analysis it is by no means a necessary one. See post Ch. "Spengler". Ch: "The Sense of Responsibility."
2. Dostojewski - The Brothers Karamazoff - The Modern Library Ed. P. 789.
3. Spengler - op.cit. Vol II. p. 116.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 48

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 49

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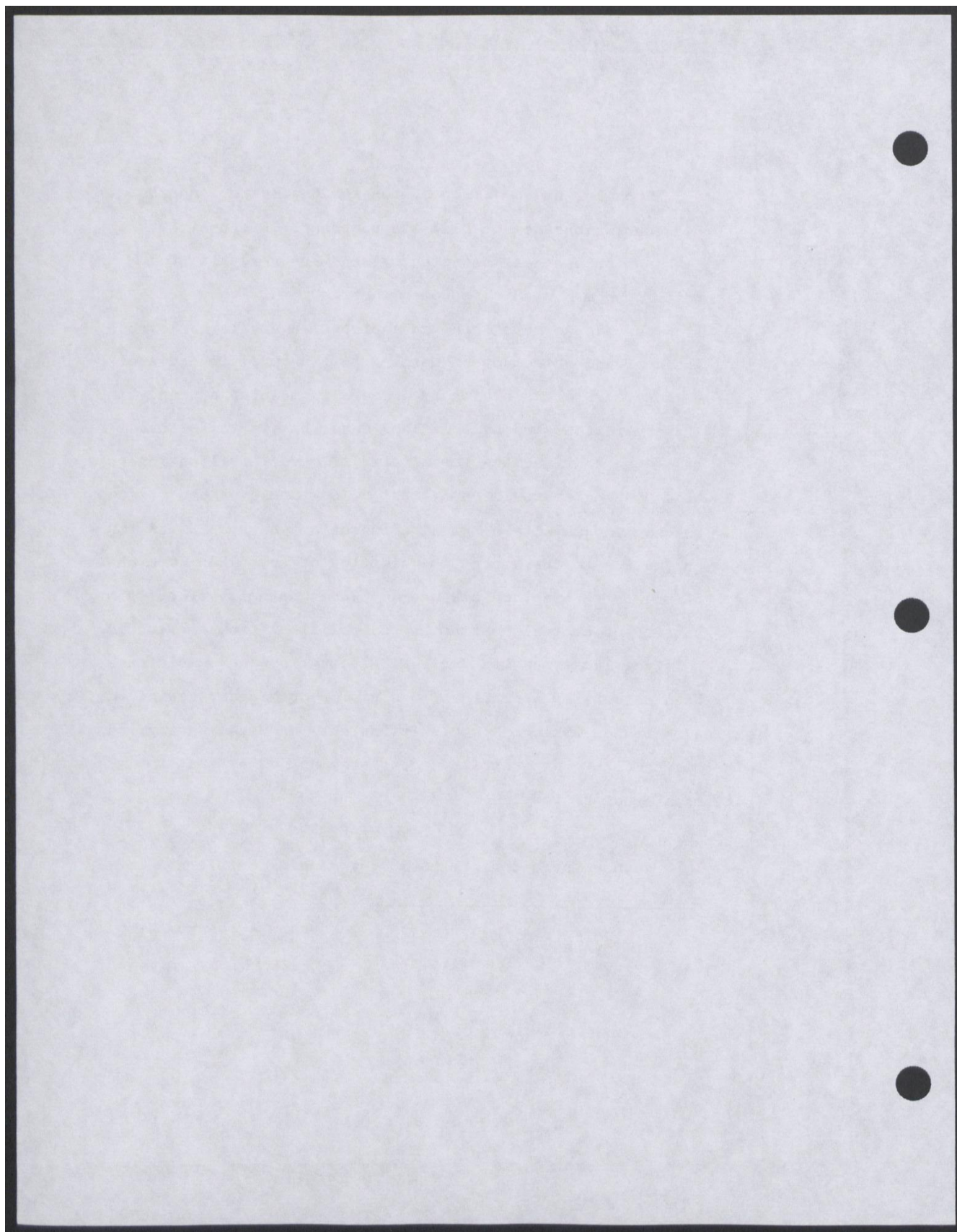
Spengler had a vision of the world-as-experience but his conclusions do not fill its vastness. His poetic imagination became fascinated by the mere analysis of power-phenomena. His approach through intuitive perception reveals no more than the empirical analysis of Toynbee.<sup>1</sup> The narrow confinement of meaning to the specific souls of each Culture seems arbitrary. There is meaning not only in the aspirations and symbols long dead, but in those that have been continued as the matrix for other civilizations. Though Spengler would reply that no Culture ever understands another in just its original connotation, he has failed to do justice to the impact the adoption of any alien form must of necessity exert on its user.<sup>2</sup> The continuity of certain aspects of ethical, aesthetic and political problemation is as significant, as its cyclical fluctuation and should have been especially accessible to a vision of history-as-inward experience. Though Spengler's insights are challenging and his predictions perhaps correct, they do not exhaust the meaning of history.

Toynbee probed for this deeper meaning but looked for

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1. For interdependence of two philosophers - see post.  
Ch: Toynbee.
  2. See post. Ch. "Spengler."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 50

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 51

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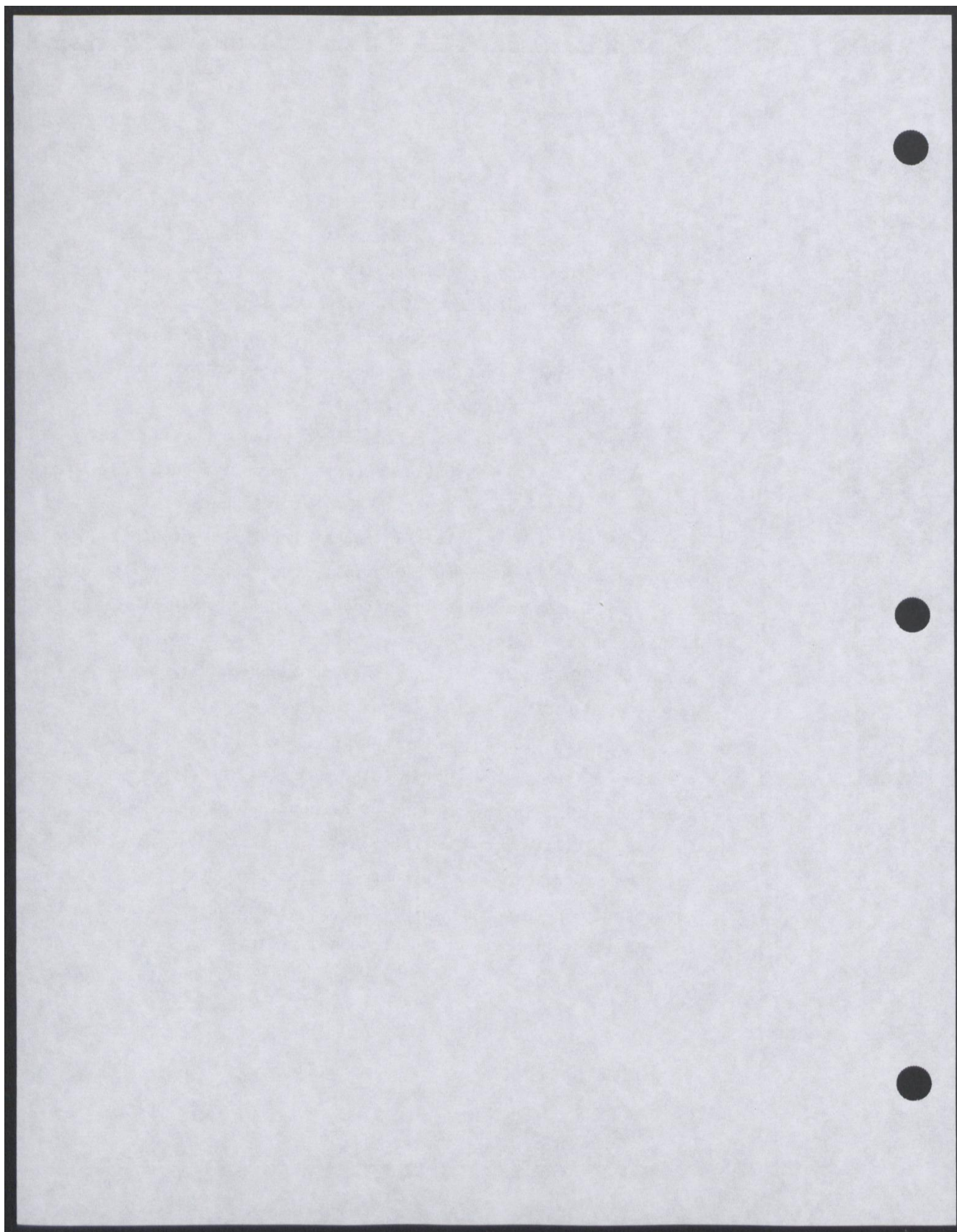
empirical verification into history instead of into himself. Accepting almost completely Spengler's methodology of comparing civilizations in their political occurrences, as well as in their esthetic and theological manifestations, he attempted to solve one problem to which Spengler never addressed himself: What causes the emergence, out of formless humanity, of the genus culture?

Toynbee finds the answer in the doctrine of challenge and response. Life presents a series of problems each a challenge to undergo an ordeal. The initial successful reaction constitutes the civilization's birth. Its growth is not determined by an organic necessity but accomplishes itself through the response to successive challenges. Each solution does not lead to an equilibrium but creates an overbalance which in turn becomes a new challenge. Progress ceases when societies fail to react to new stimuli.

A civilization grows through the leadership of a creative minority which directs the majority, by mimesis, a social drill, in the absence of direct inspiration. Yet in every civilization mimesis eventually breaks down and the creative minority becomes a dominant minority substituting force for charm. The progressive differentiation of a civilization into a dominant minority and an internal proletariat, which is in, but not of, a given society, with creativity and meaning stunted,

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 52

**Image ID:** 15212841



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diverts energies into other - worldly pursuits, culminating in a transcendental knowledge of the unity of mankind through a universal church. By this act of faith the internal proletariat rescues the values of the collapsing society, which it embodies in the new civilization erected by the victorious external proletariat on the ruins of the old. The decay of civilizations has as its outward manifestations a universal state, in which the internal schism occurs, a period of contending states and a final apocalyptic emergence of a higher religion as the embodiment of the meaning of history.

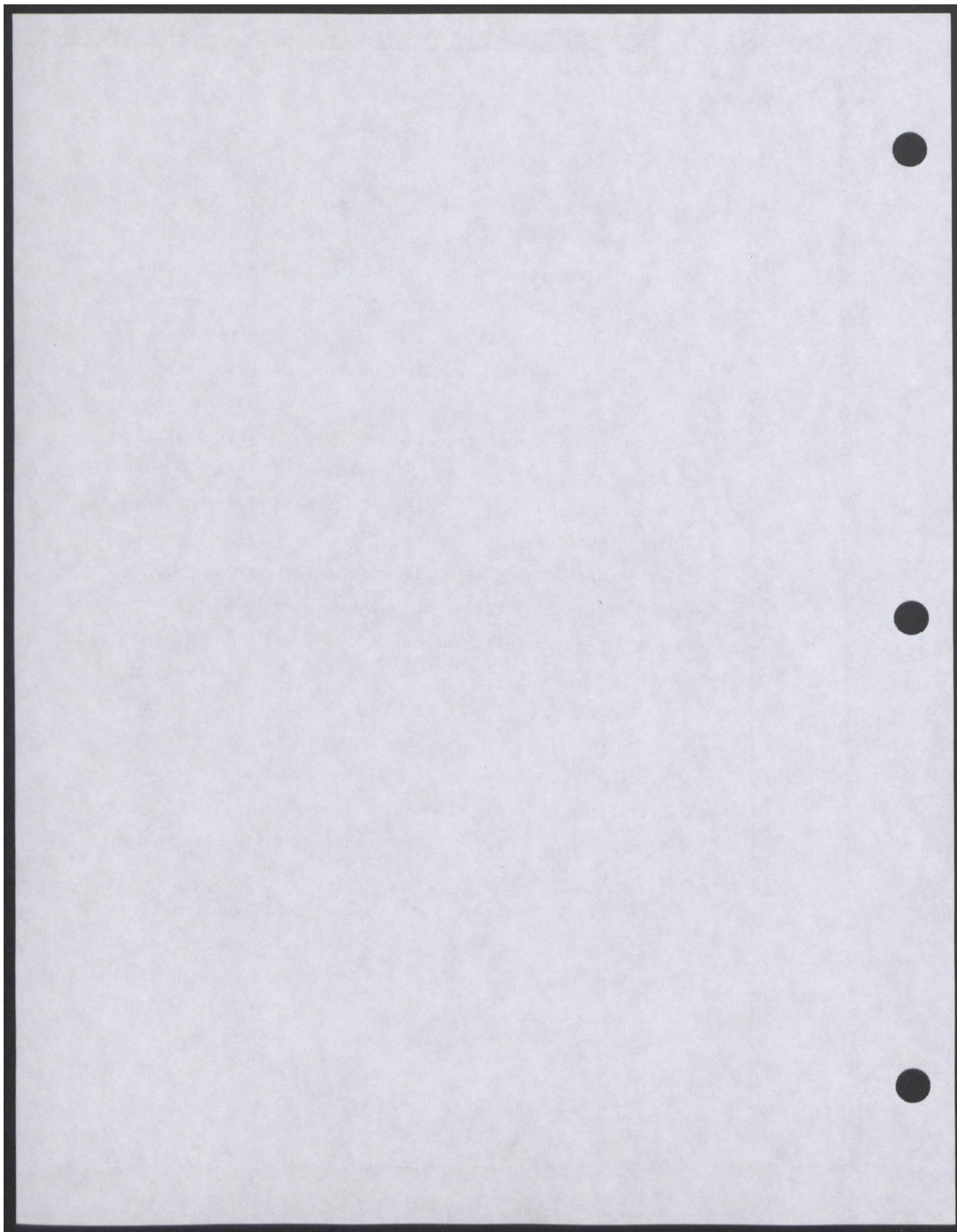
Toynbee's theory of Challenge-and-Response is very similar to Hegel's dialectic. It consequently does not represent a negation of determinism but a description of its operation. The analysis of response almost exclusively in terms of challenges leads to a more refinement of the Environment theory. Since Toynbee attempts to verify theological assumptions by an empirical method, success becomes the only criterion of moral fitness. Survival reveals God's sanction to the elect. History's purpose is identical with man's aspirations.

The unsatisfactoriness of Toynbee's philosophy derives from his method. Though his conclusions give an intimation of transcendental experience,<sup>1</sup> they are not supported by

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1. In the Concept of Transfiguration.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 54  
**Image ID:** 15212843



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his data. The attempt to find a causal realization of a divine purpose in the manifestations of political power results in such inconsistencies as the assertion that the miracle of Christianity will save the West, despite the collapse of every other civilization, and despite the fact that in Toynbee's scheme universal churches appear as concomitants of disintegration.

An inward experience cannot be proved by empirical data, however. A philosophy of history without a profound metaphysics will forever juxtapose surface data and can never satisfy the totality of man's desire for meaning.

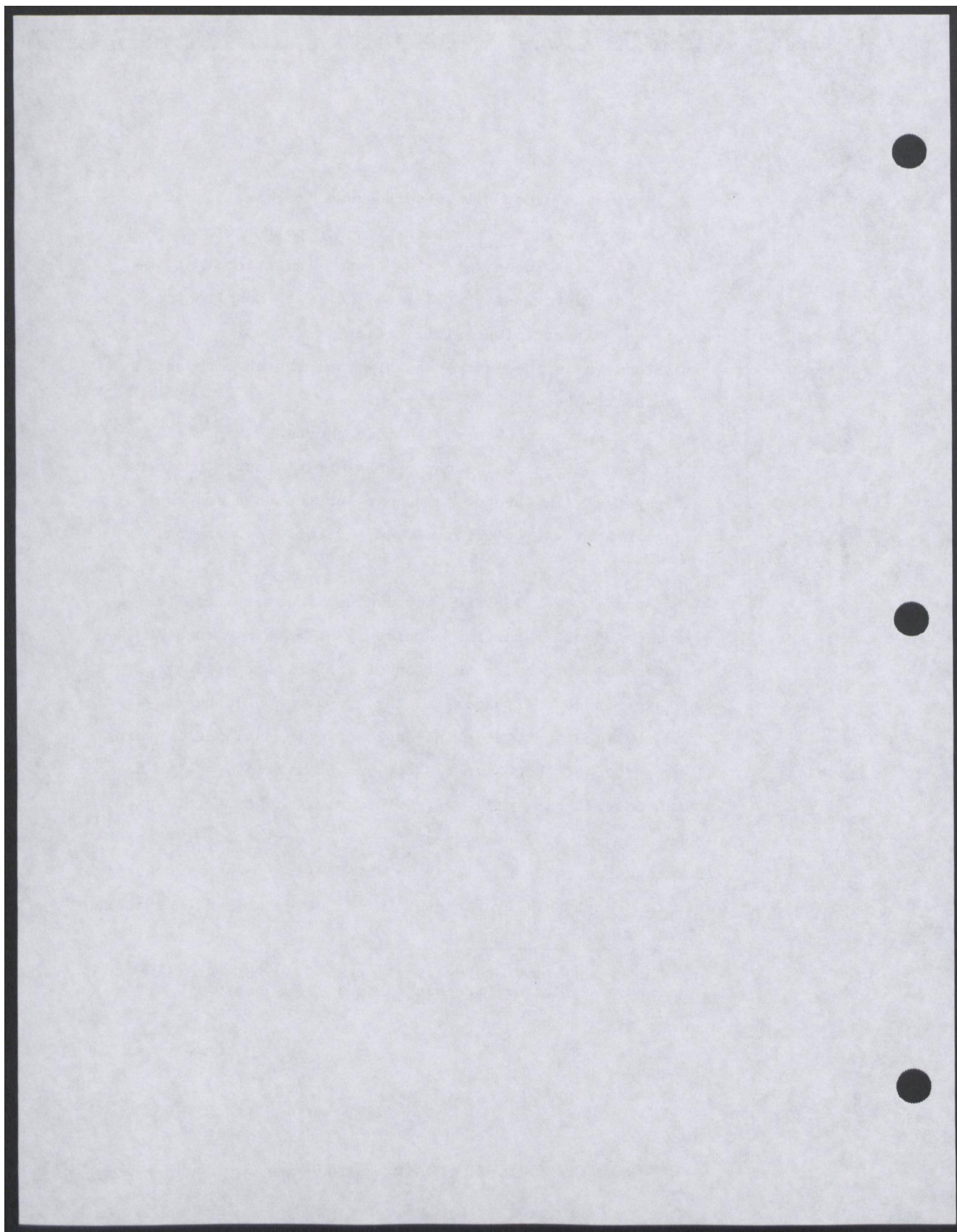
Spengler had a vision but did not press its implications. Yet his intuition of History-as-an Experience has pointed the way to the solution of the enigma posed by the experience of freedom and the knowledge of necessity. Kant realized that the phenomenal world is explored in vain for a proof of those ideas, "the possibilities of which no human intelligence will ever fathom, but the truth of which no sophistry, will ever wrest from the conviction of even the commonest man."<sup>1</sup> An analysis of historical phenomena reveals but the inevitability inherent in completed action. Freedom,

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1. Kant - Critique of Practical Reason. p. 231 (Kant's Theory of Ethics) translated by T. K. Abbott.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 56

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 57

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on the other hand, testifies to an act of self-transcendence which overcomes the inexorability of events by infusing them with its spirituality. The ultimate meaning of history-as of life- we can find only within ourselves.

What is the content of this transcendental experience? This is not easy to express. When Socrates in "the Republic" is asked to explain the "Idea of the Good" he replies that it can not be defined. Man can attain its vision only by analogy, by studying those objects which contain some portion of the ultimate reality, such as beauty, astronomy, mathematics. Reflection may then lead to a sudden illumination which will reveal the transcendental condition of all knowledge.

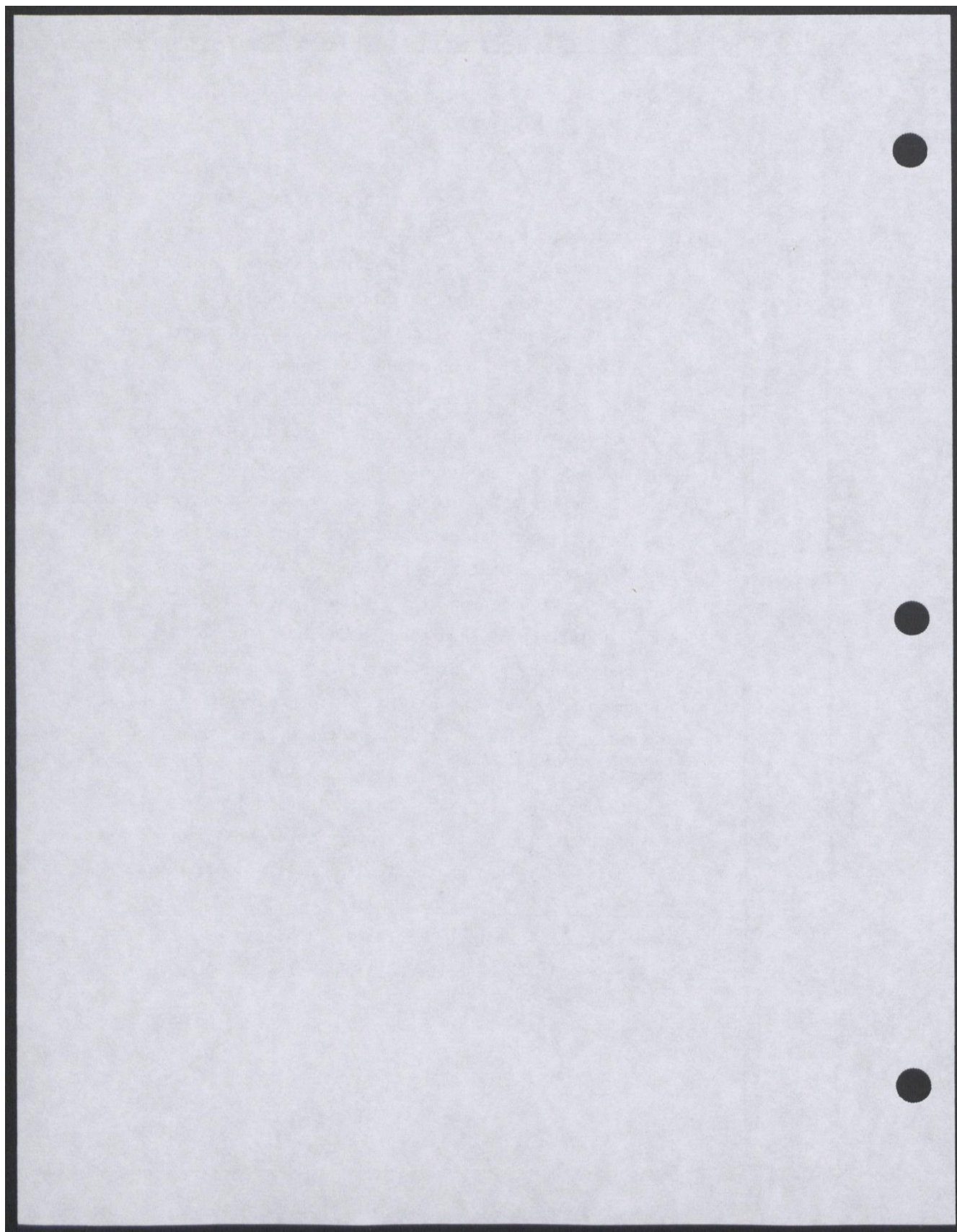
Dostojevski has been called "the great criminal."<sup>1</sup> Yet Dostojevski's insight into the depths, his very ability to do so without flinching, rested on a saintly recognition of this transcendence, on an apprehension of the unity of mankind, expressed in the concept of love as the mystical bond of the universe.

"If you love everything" says Father Zosima<sup>2</sup> "you will perceive the divine mystery of things" and "What grows lives and is alive only through the feeling of its contact with

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1. Thomas Mann - Introduction to Short Novels of Dostojevski.
  2. Dostojevski - The Brothers Karamasoff - p.383.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 58

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 59

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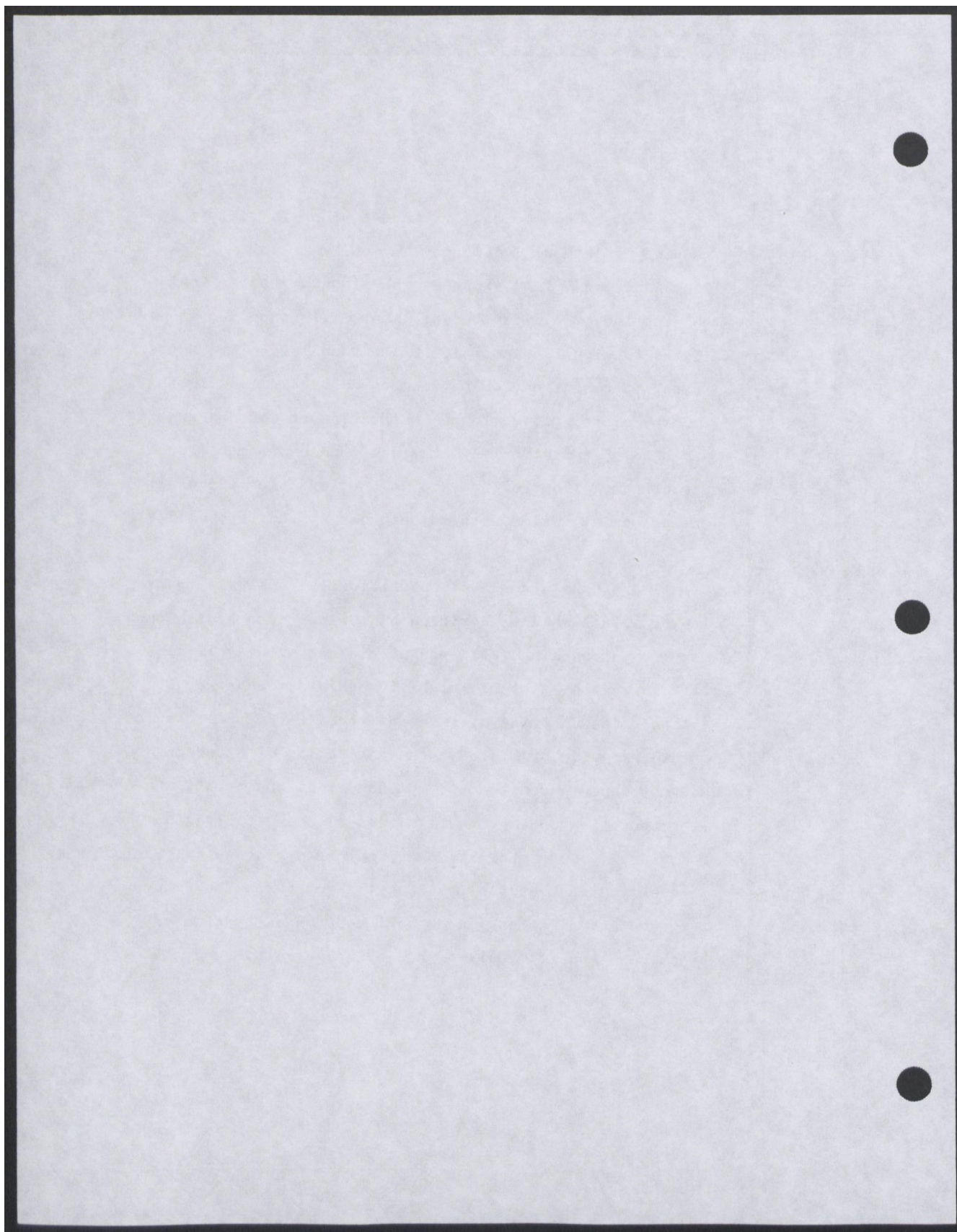
other mysterious worlds. If that feeling is lost, the heavenly growth will die away in you."

And "the Idiot" expresses the longing for a final culmination of all destinies: "What difference can it make if the tension is abnormal, if the result itself, if the moment of sensation, when remembered and examined in the healthy state, proves to be in the highest degree harmony and beauty; and gives an unheard of and undreamed of feeling of completion, of balance, of satisfaction and exultant prayerful fusion with the highest synthesis of life?"

There exist two levels of historical analysis then; the empirical which classifies historical data by its phenomenal appearance and will perforce discover a cyclical pattern and the ethical which views history as a key to action. The doctrine of immanent necessity represents the outsider's view of history, the conception of a person who has not experienced the accomplishment of the event. No representation of inevitability can, however, absolve the individual from giving his own meaning to his own existence. Necessity describes the past but freedom rules the future. Purposes reveal a task to be achieved, an expression of a soul, not an attribute of historical events. The ethical

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 60

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basis of conduct depends on the transcendental experience implied by Plato, Kant or Dostojewski.

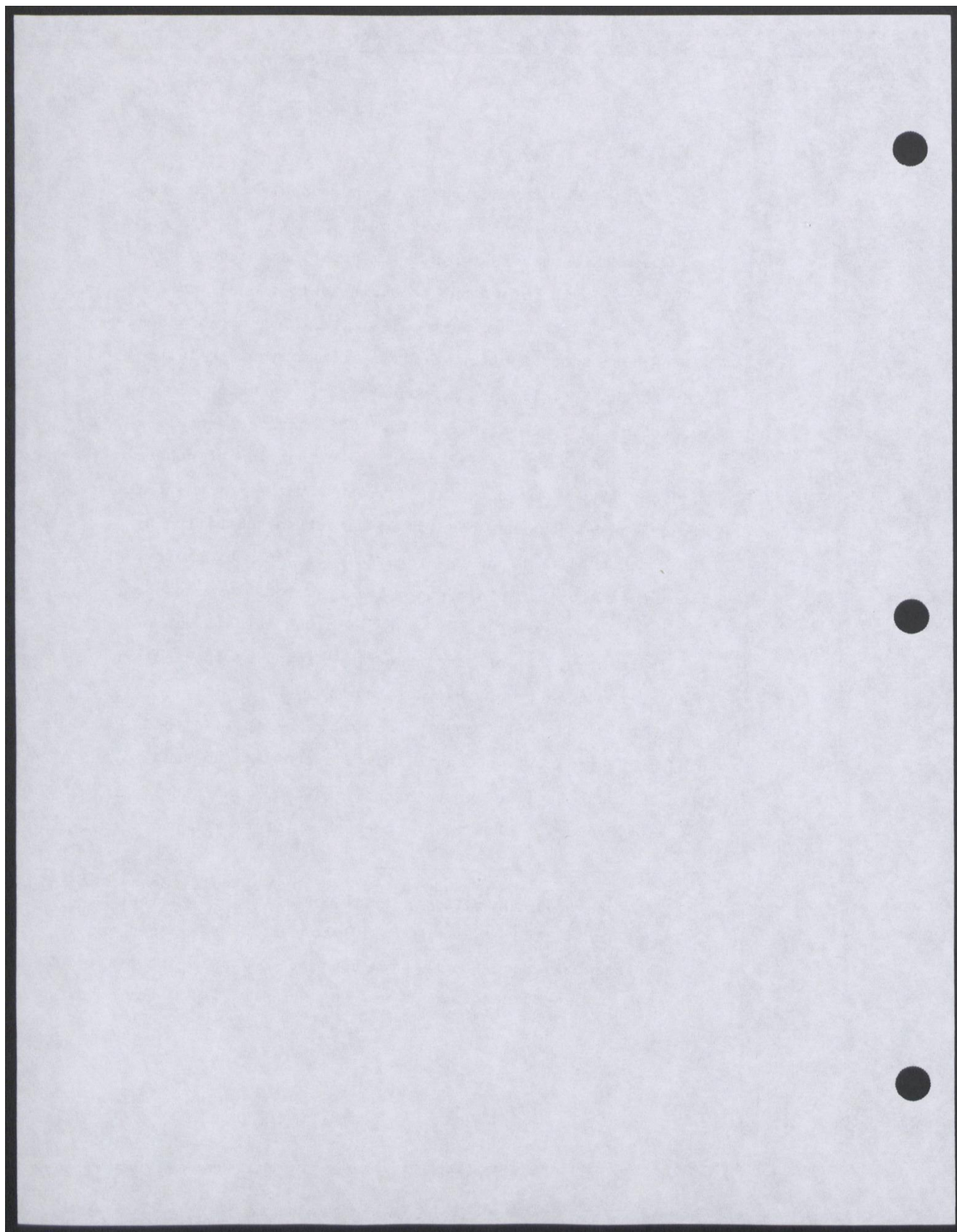
Does this mean that mysticism contains the only key to history, with reason but an obstacle to the ultimate determination of the meaning of life? Kant has already answered the question. Morality derives from a mystic relationship to the Infinite,<sup>1</sup> a personal experience which elevates man above the realm of necessity. This transcendental experience, however, enables reason to give rules of general applicability. The categorical imperative is not a law in the ordinary sense but a guide to an action postulated by the experience of freedom.<sup>2</sup> Kant's philosophy of history is an emanation of this transcendence, a corollary to demonstrate the kingdom of ends, where each man is both subject and legislator, the highest concept achieved by the Western mind of the dignity of the individual.<sup>3</sup>

What is the relationship then of morality to a philosophy of history? The magic attitude can find no such relation and must have recourse in the "man-god," and a deterministic psychology. Viewing the succession of growth and decay,

1. Kant does not really say this. But his postulation of God, freedom and immortality imply it. For the categorical imperative can only serve as a necessity of thought to a certain attitude. See post, "History and Man's Experience of Morality."
2. Indissolubly connected with a concept of limits see post: "The Sense of Responsibility."
3. Only in the "Eternal Peace," not in the "idea for a Universal History," see post.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 62

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the wars, the destruction of values, one is tempted to agree with Hegel<sup>1</sup> "only by consoling ourselves that it would not be otherwise can we accept these enormities." Life does seem just a process of dying, power does seem the criterion of values. Trasymechus' question does appear unanswerable.

Yet out of this unfolding of seeming inevitability, there appears to emerge a feeling of humility, a recognition by man of his limits. "Know thyself" - was the motto of the oracle of Delphi. This was not meant psycho-analytically but implied: "Know that you are a man and not God." From the acceptance of limits derives the feeling of reverence which sees history not merely as an ordeal, or mankind as a tool but as a deep fulfillment. This feeling of humility, this acknowledgement that one is Man and not God, has as its full implication the concept of tolerance, the very basis<sup>2</sup> for the dignity of the moral personality of the individual.

And yet a last dilemma emerges. Even though our contemplation of history may yield as its deepest meaning a

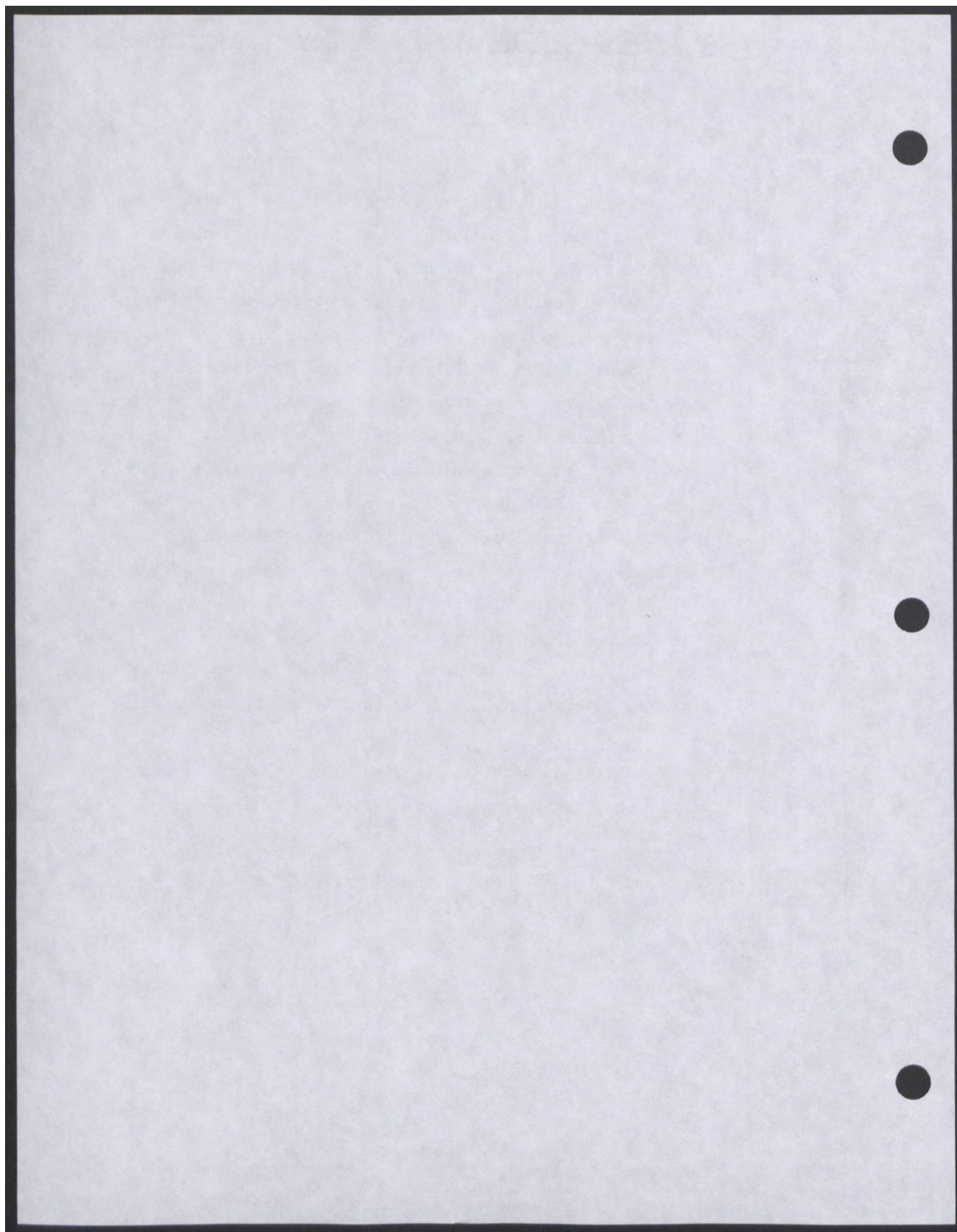
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1. Hegel. The Philosophy of History. p. 35.

2. See post C1: The Sense of Responsibility.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 64

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 65

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feeling of limits as the basis of the ultimate moral personality of man, we are still faced with the fact that no civilization has yet been permanent, no longing completely fulfilled, no answer ever gone unchallenged. It is a difficult question and one must not reply dogmatically.

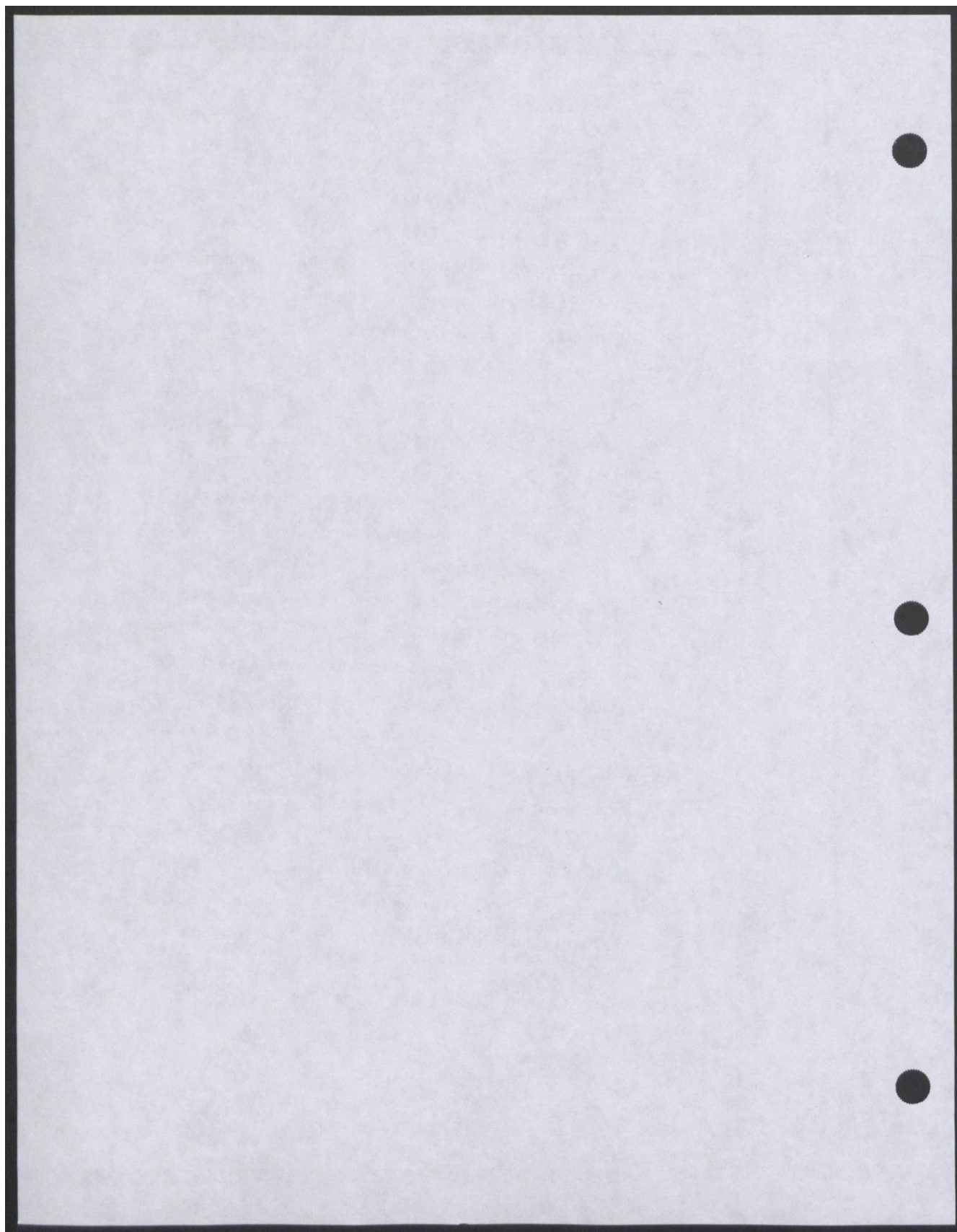
It is not easy to define what degree of permanence what hope of apocalyptic fulfillment a value or an attitude requires. Perhaps the experience of living offers a clue. We know we must die and yet live with a sense of eternity. We can never prove that our action, even a second ago, was really freely willed and yet entertain no doubt of our freedom as each new situation arises. Despite the limits of our life, we know that our actions are irrevocable and that even inactivity posits an absolute relation. We can live this dilemma only by a measure of acceptance and despite the knowledge of the transitoriness of our lot, with a mode of permanence.

This acceptance is not a kismetetic resignation but an active recognition of limits, which enables man to face and transcend the majesty of the flow of history and the directness of life.<sup>1</sup> This is the profounder

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1. For full development see post "The Sense of Responsibility."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 66  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 67

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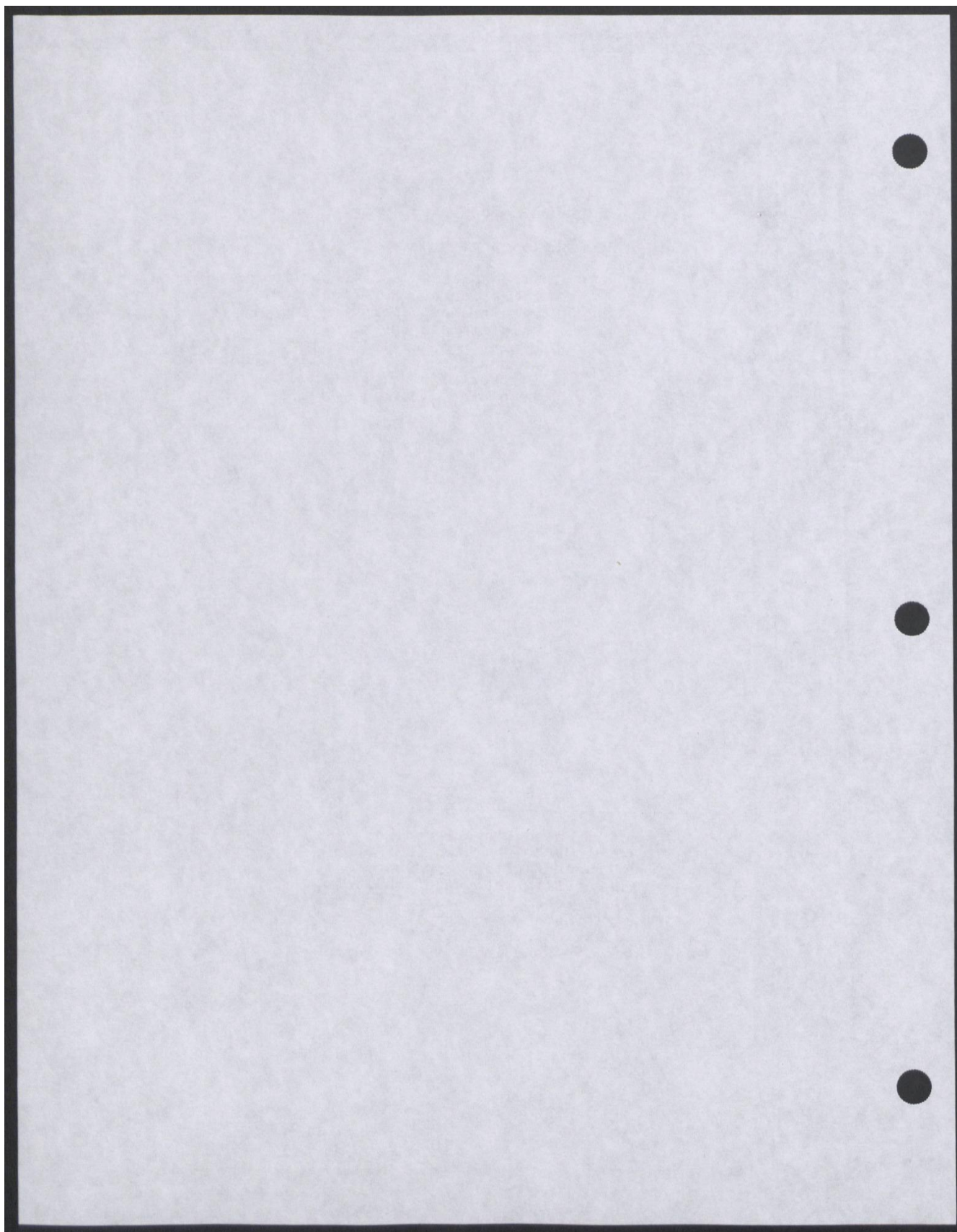
meaning of Goethe's poem that Spengler chose as the  
theme of his philosophy:

In the Endless, self-repeating  
flows for evermore the same.  
Myriad arches, springing, meeting,  
hold at rest the mighty frame.  
Streams from all things love of living  
grandest star and humblest clod.  
All the straining, all the striving  
is eternal peace in God.

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1. Wenn im Unendlichen Dasselbe  
Sich wiederholend ewig fliesst  
Das tausendfaeltig Gewoelote  
Sich kraeftig ineinanderschliesst,  
Stroemt Lebenslust aus allen Dingen  
Dem kleinsten, wie dem grossten Stern  
Und alles Draengen, alles Ringen  
Ist ewige Ruhe in Gott, dem Herrn

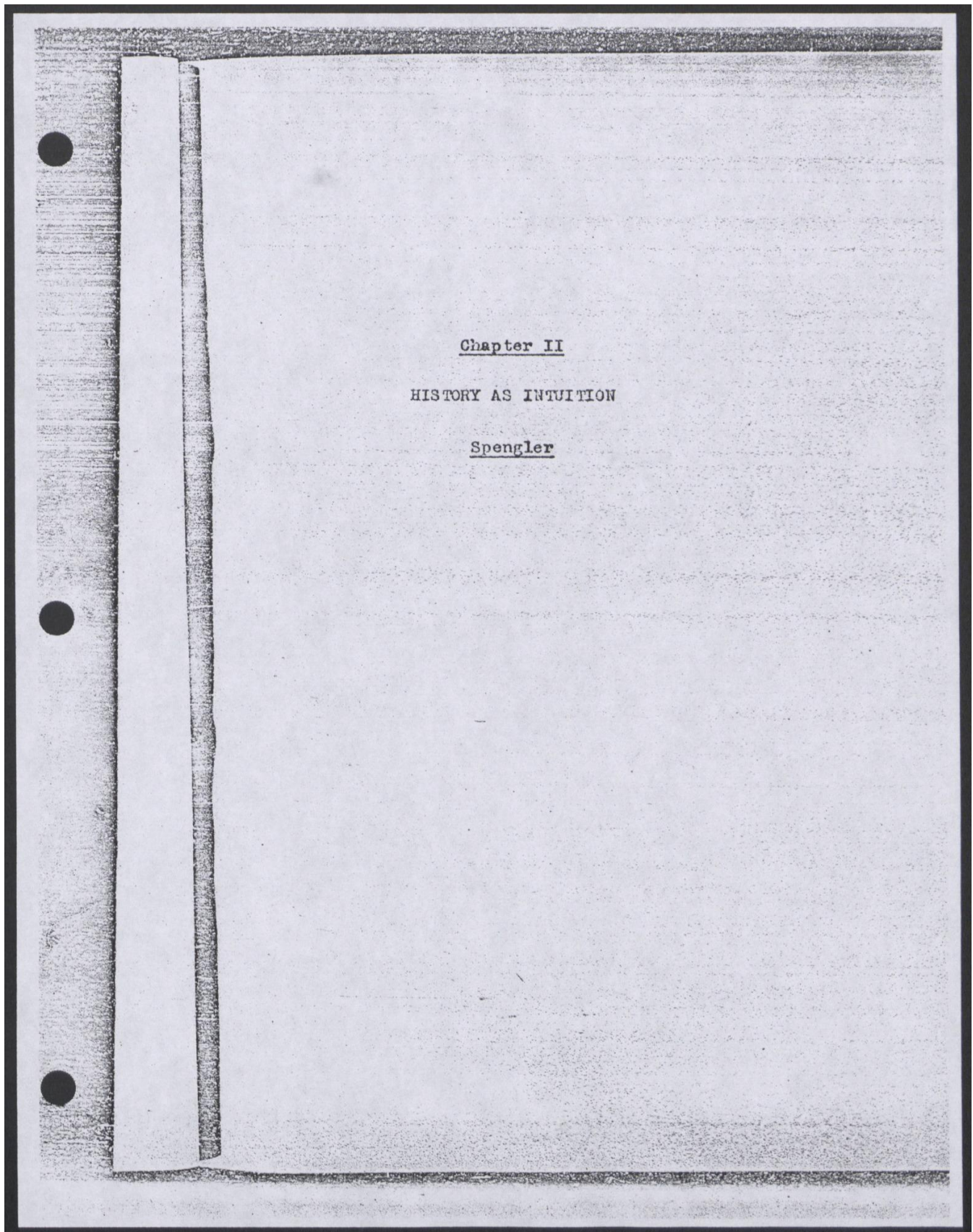
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 68

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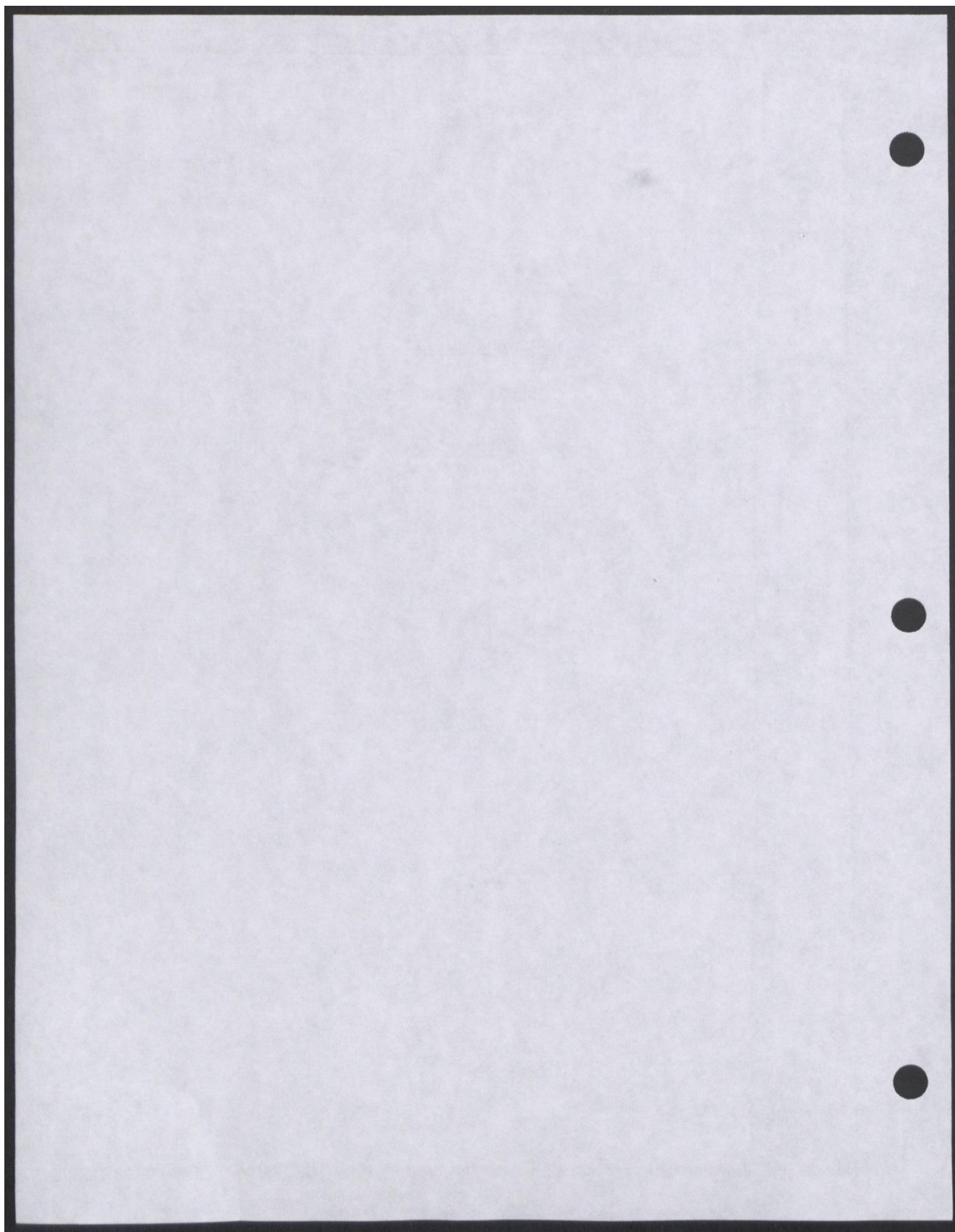
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 69

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**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 70

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#### INTRODUCTION

Spengler denied that history worked towards purposes ascertainable by rational analysis. Progress is a causality imposed by the intellect, man's reaction to the dual qualities of world-longing and world-fear that are the result of his relation as a microcosm towards a macrocosm, his knowledge of limits, the certainty of death.

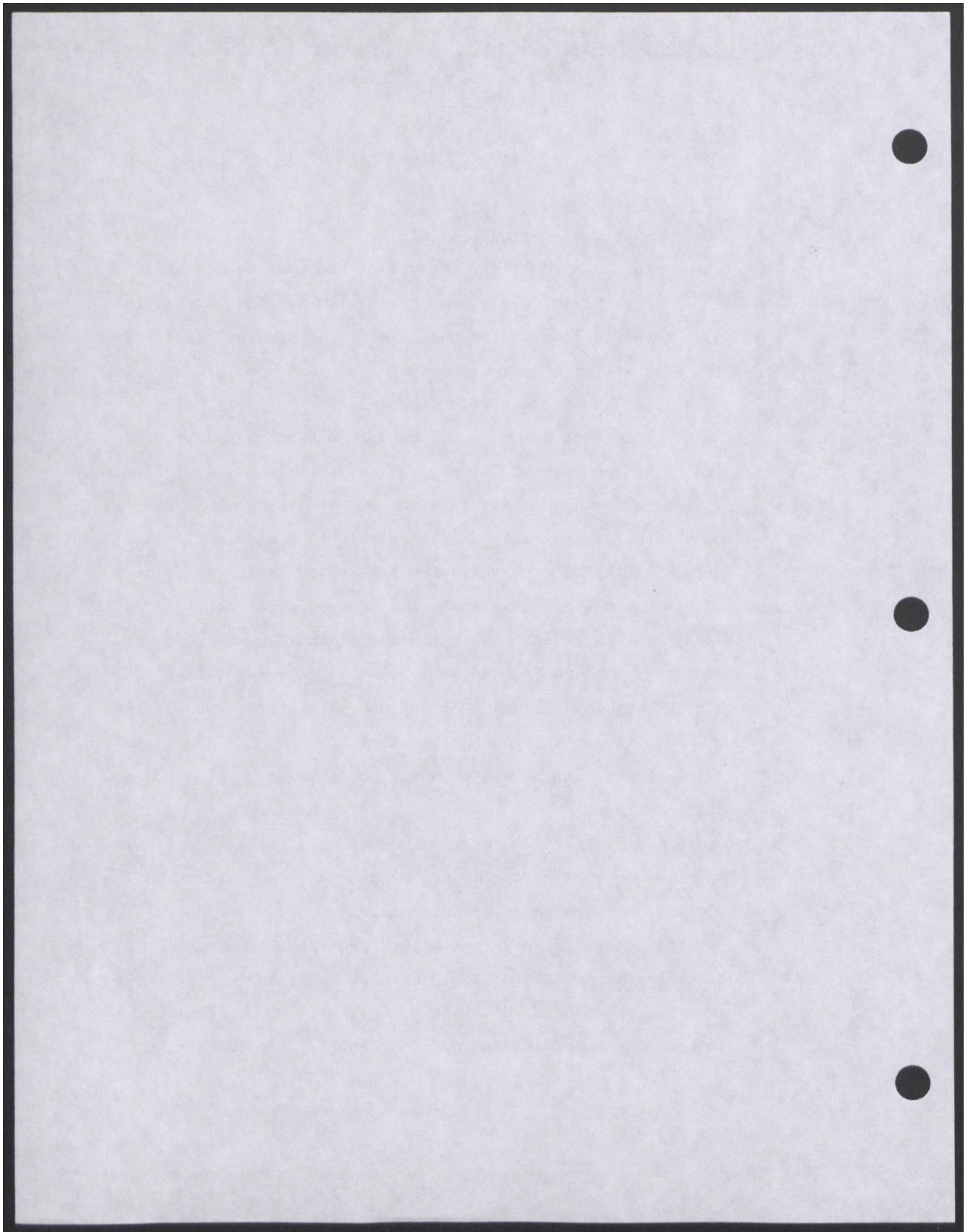
History, on the other hand, contains the problem of motion, the enigma of the ever-unique experience, the dilemma that forces man not only to observe the movement in a scene, but at the same time to participate in that movement. This impossibility of ever observing that which is in the process of observing itself, leads to the inner experience of a destiny idea, that is lived with absolute certainty by every man of the early culture and the beat of which is ever decreasing in the late Megalopolitan. Destiny represents eternal becoming, the intuitive answer to the question of when, the source and resolution of all of man's hope, the ultimate realization of inevitability.

Causality governs the become, with space as its representation. Becoming and being, Space and Time, Wisdom and Intellect, Freedom and Necessity constitute the true polarities of life, giving rise to man's interpretation of existence either under the aspect of the World-as-History or the World-as-Nature.

The ordering of history into ancient, medieval and modern, the Darwinian theory of evolution, the concept of

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 72

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infinite human progress become equally meaningless. Instead, there emerge the shapes of the great cultures, as the carriers of all of the meaning of humanity. Each is a product of the soil in which it grew, awakening in a moment when the fear of death and the longing for life synthesised into a picture of the world from which emerges the Grand Myth, the symbol of all the problems and all the potentialities inherent in the culture. The inward representation of this image is the culture's soul. Each culture has a determinate life-span before returning to the biological ages that spawned it in the shape of civilization, a state of absolute finishedness with the problems answered, the style lost. Philosophy of history to Spengler is not a question of industriously adding epochs to epochs, nor of the mere scientific collection of data. Data provides but the raw-material, the condition for the higher experience, the physiognomic tact, which illuminates the meaning of the symbols, and explains the stages of development. The morphology of history is Spengler's task, one eminently fit for a Faustian (Western) Thinker.<sup>1</sup> Cultures are compared in terms of their inner meaning. Their contemporary epochs reveal functions of identical stages in development.

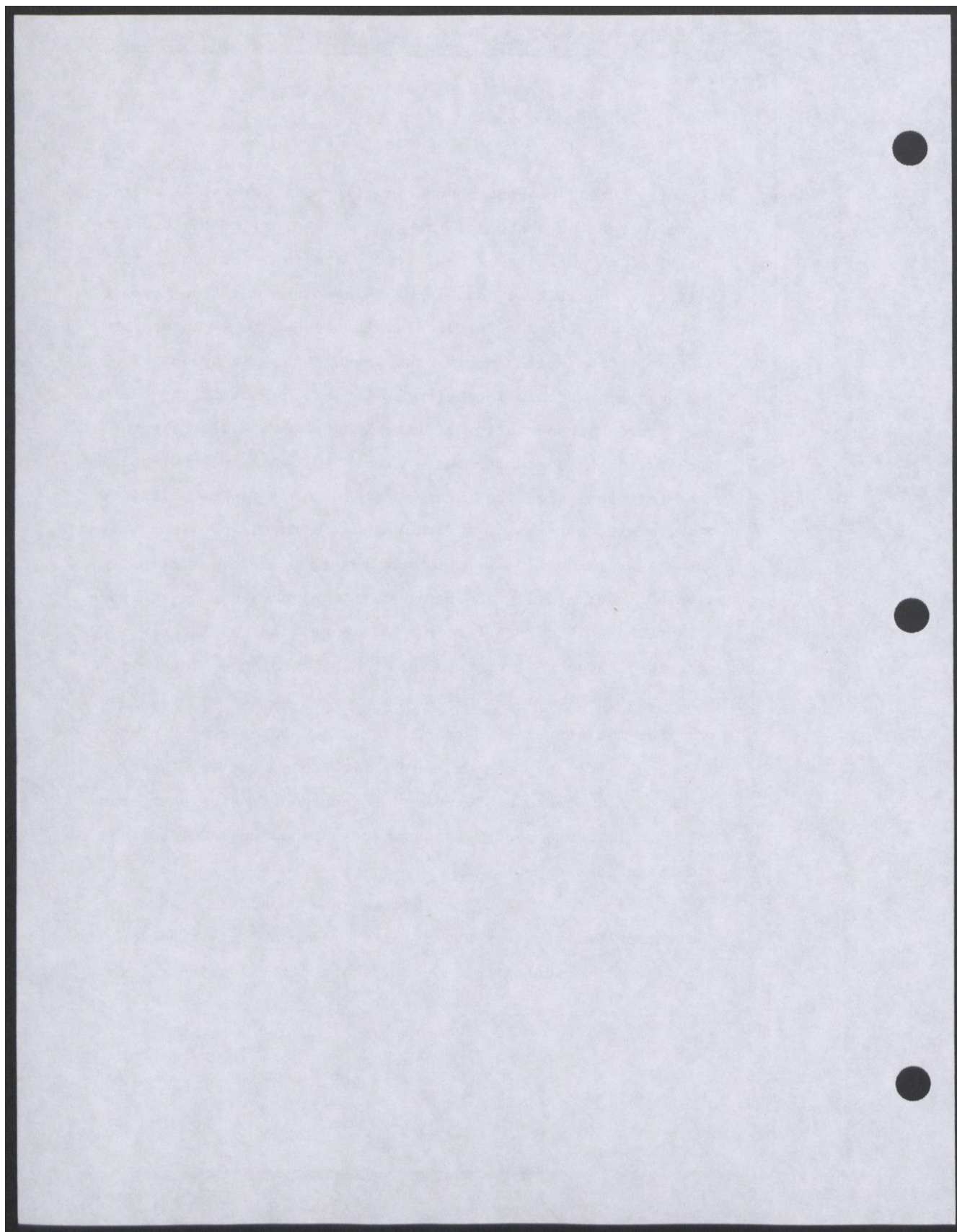
Becoming and become, destiny and causality emerge as man's problems at every stage and permeate all his creations, art, the state, religion, economics and natural-science. And

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1. See post.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 74

**Image ID:** 15212863



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at the end of the road, while Caesarism rules in the Megalopolis and man's dilemmas are thought through to steel-bright sharpness, occurs a moment of realization that after all, the analysis had not led to its goal, that man holds in his hand nothing but the early myth in another shape. At this point the second Religiousness comes over mankind and ideation in the grand style ceases in all fields of activities. The civilization petrifies, the period of fellah-existence as objects to a destiny that is no longer experienced commences.

Since destiny is the representation of the will-to-live, dependent on the self-assurance of its exponent, an analysis of the elements of political success ensues, not in a normative framework of purposive realization but as an answer to the pragmatic problem of prevailing.

Prof. von Beckrall<sup>1</sup> rejects Spengler's philosophy as a metaphysical creation, not in the first instance based on empirically verified observations. This misses the essence<sup>2</sup> of an inductive method. Not the existence, but the adequacy of metaphysical concepts, not their exclusive foundation in particular observations, but their applicability to the pervasive-<sup>3</sup>ness of experience must be the subject of analysis.

We must further decide how far Spengler is a follower of Hegel's despite his attacks on the ascription of rational

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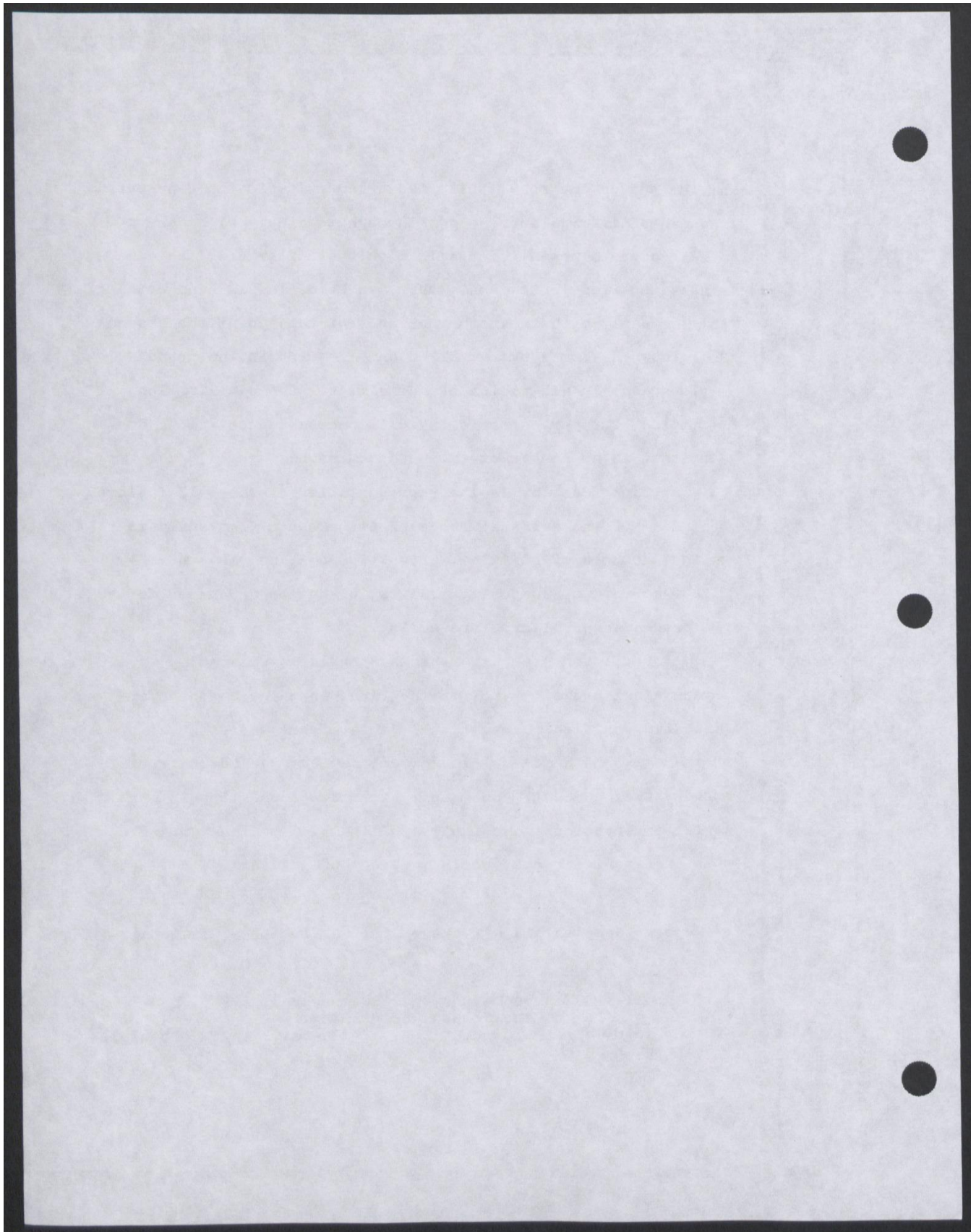
1. Schmoller's Jahrbuch fuer Gesetzgebung Vol. 47, p. 33

2. See Appendix "A" - The Concept of Meaning.

3. See ante Ch. I - Introduction. Post Appendix A - The Possibility of Meaning.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 76

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**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 77

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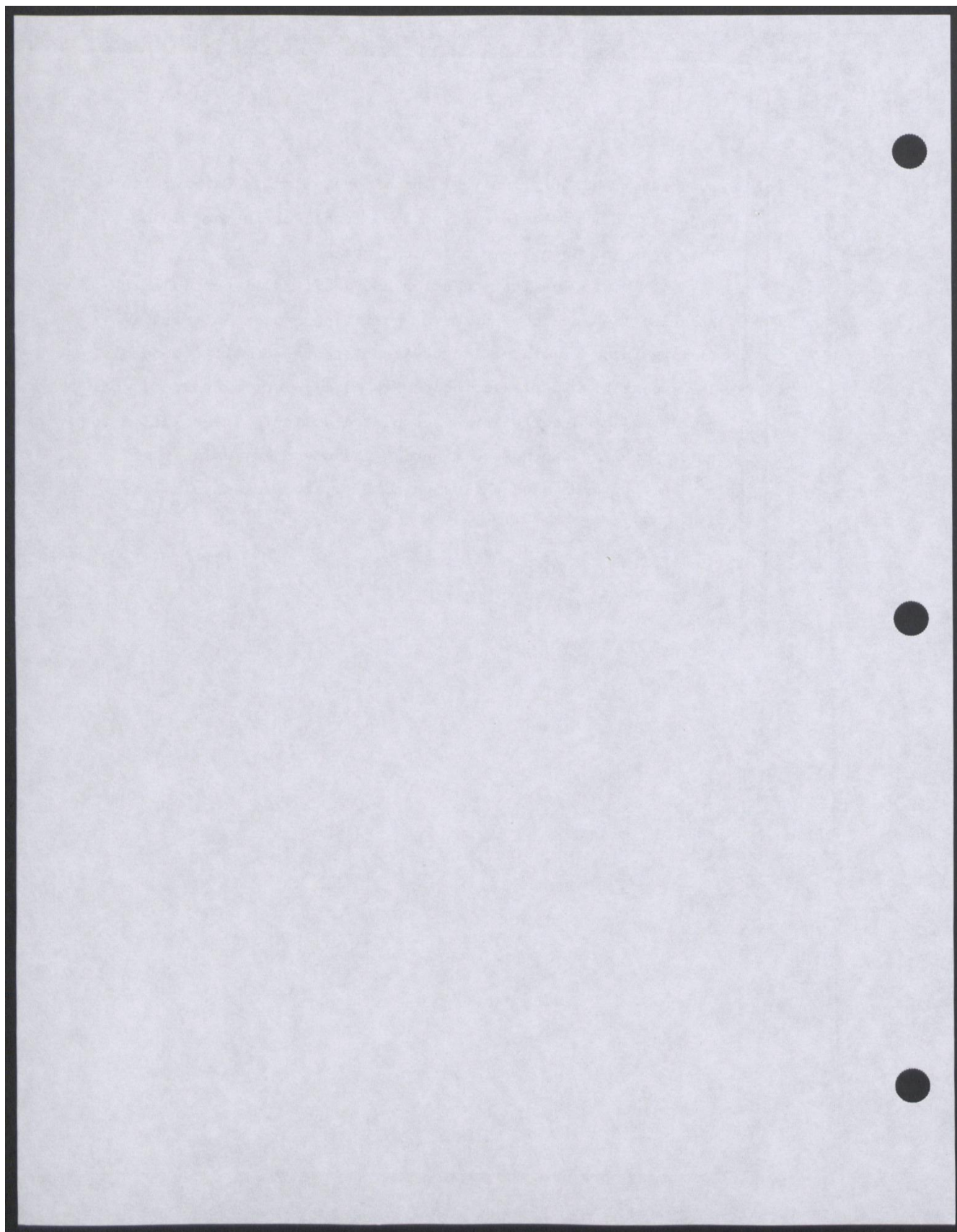
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purposes to history and what was his relation to Darwin, the object of his ridicule and yet the chronicler in the biological world of Spengler's political realm.

And so the last question emerges: Is it possible to describe the mere components of political success without imparting into the evaluation of its elements normative concepts? Is it possible to utilize necessity as a guide to conduct, not merely as the description of completed action? The solution to these problems can not be found in phenomena but only in a personality, expressed philosophically by its metaphysical assumptions.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 78

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2. METAPHYSICS.

<sup>1</sup>  
"Regard the flowers at eventide as, one after the other, they close in the setting sun. Strange is the feeling that then presses in upon you - a feeling of enigmatic fear in the presence of this blind, dream-like, earthbound existence. The dumb forest, the silent meadows, this bush, that twig do not stir themselves, it is the wind that plays with them. Only the little gnat is free - he dances still in the evening light, he moves whither he will.

"Servitude and Freedom - this in the last and deepest analysis is the differentia by which we distinguish vegetable and animal existence. Yet only the plant is entirely and wholly what it is; in the being of the animal there is something dual. A vegetable is only a vegetable; an animal is a vegetable and something else besides. A herd that huddles together trembling in the presence of danger, a child that clings weeping to its mother, a man desperately striving to force his way into God - all these are seeking to return out of the life of freedom into the vegetal servitude from which they were emancipated into individuality and loneliness."

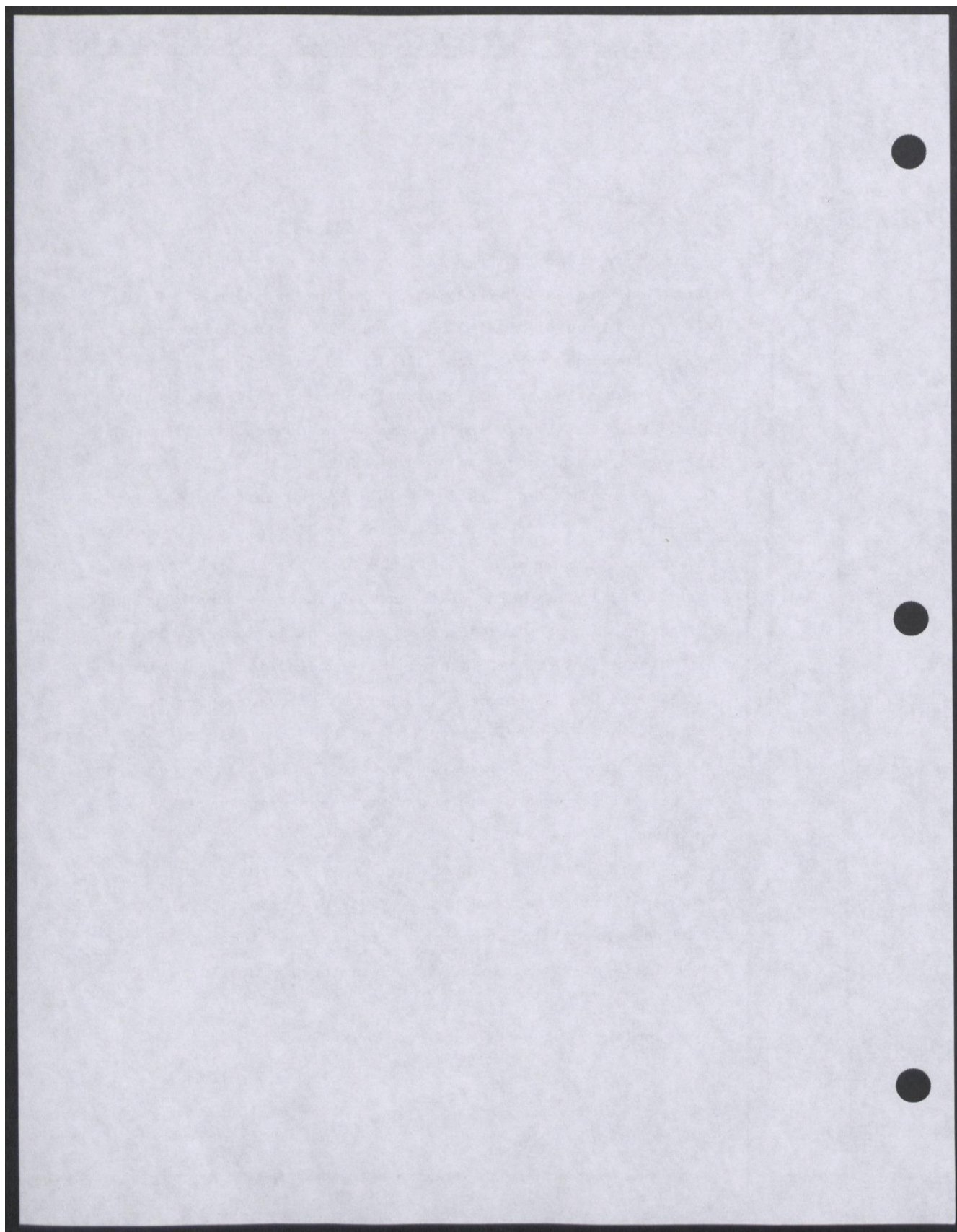
So begins Volume 2 of Spengler's Decline of the West and therein is to be found the essence of his metaphysical doctrine. Everything existing contains something cosmic, the periodicity of the seasons, the rhythm of birth, life and decay.

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1. Spengler - The Decline of the West - Vol.II p 3.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 80

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 81

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But animals do not merely exist. They represent a unit that has separated itself from the All, and can define its position in a world-around that is felt by it as environment. They are microcosm in a macrocosm.

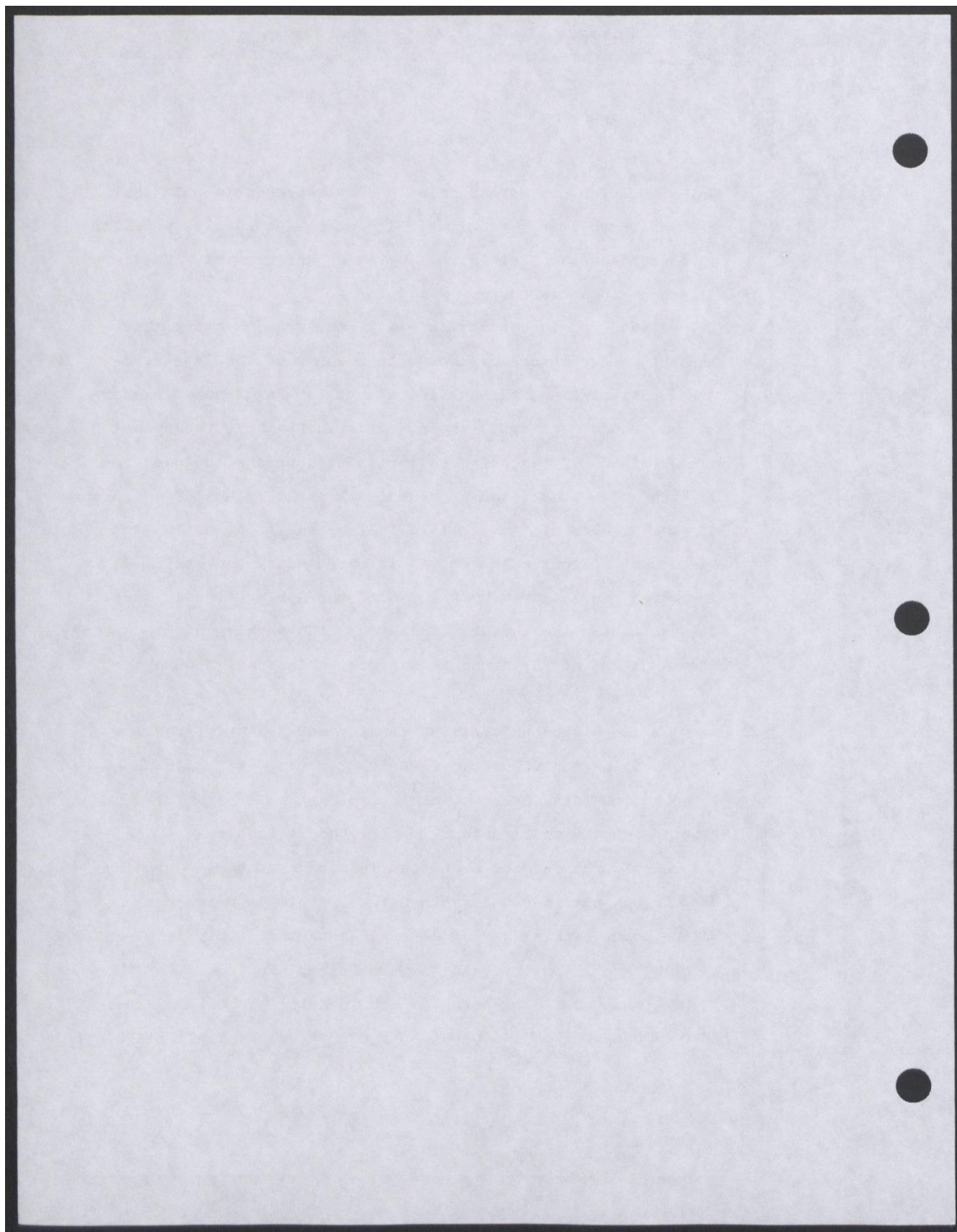
The cosmic has rhythm, tact, the grand harmony that binds together lovers or crowds in moments of absolute wordless understanding, the pulse that unites a sequence of generations into a meaningful whole. This is Destiny, the symbol of the blood, of sex, of duration. This answers the question of when and whither, and represents the only method of approaching the problem of time. It is felt by the great artist in his moment of contemplation, it is embodied by the statesman in action and is lived by the man of the Spring-time culture. It constitutes the essence of tragedy, the problem of "too late", when a moment of the present is irrevocably consigned to the past.

The microcosm contains tension and polarity, the loneliness of the individual in a world of strange significances, in which the total inner meaning of others remains an eternal riddle. Rhythm and tension, longing and fear, characterize the relationship of the microcosm to the macrocosm. Organisms contain consciousness, (Dasein-Being). Animals represent Waking-Being (Waking-Consciousness, Wachsein). Only in sleep everything existing reverts to mere Being.

For Man waking-being is confined to the realm of the eye. The sounds of the night, the odor of flowers all stimulate

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 82

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 83

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a "whither" in the world of light. Of the world of scent, man knows little, of the nature of the butterfly, whose crystalline eyes focus a picture of myriad possibilities, nothing. Thus night has always been felt as akin to death and the idea of an invisible God constitutes the highest manifestation of human transcendence.

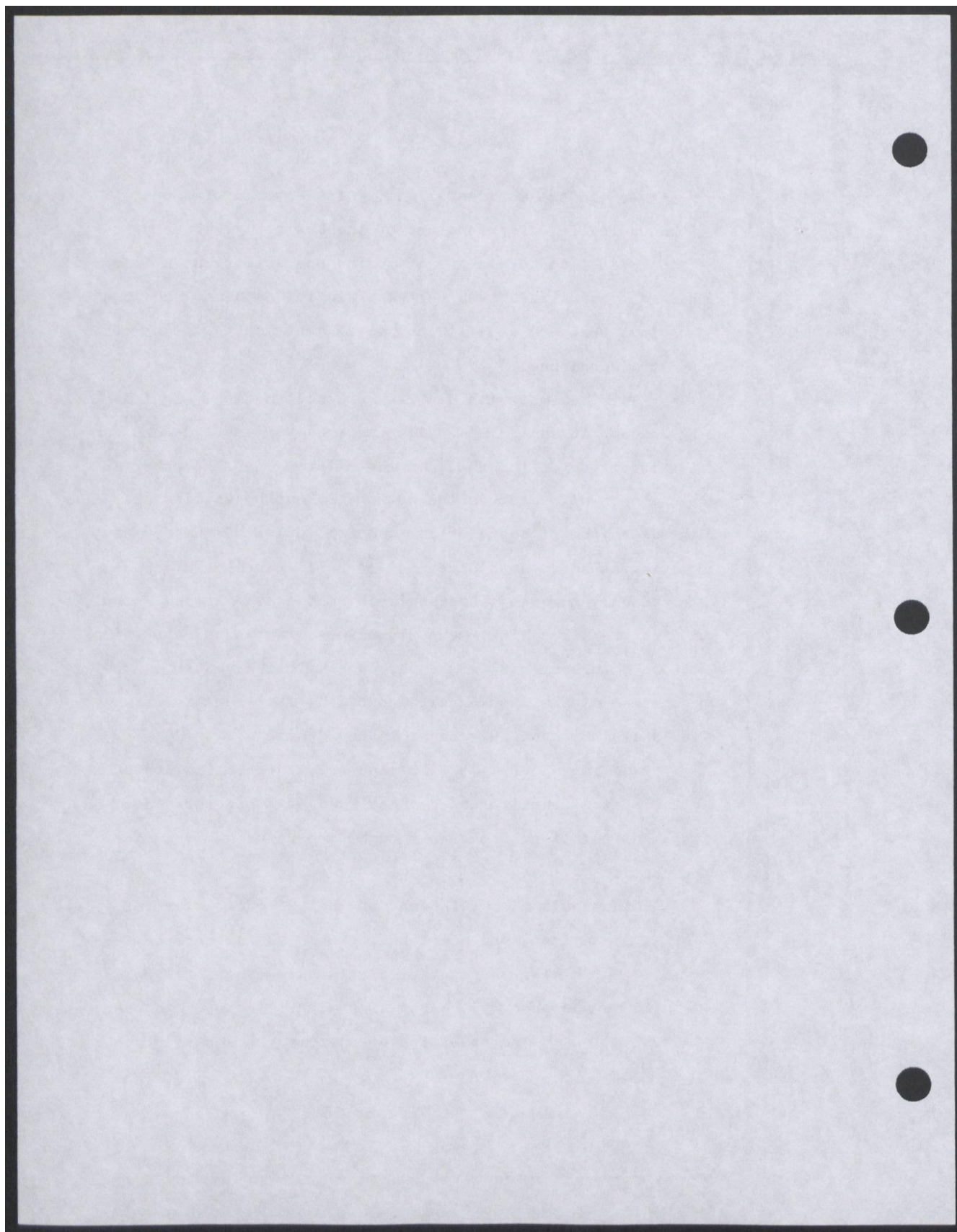
This has made the depth-experience the most significant concept in man's life. The awareness of the I depends on the recognition of the Thou, of the existence of the other in the environment. Just as the notion of Destiny is tied up with the rhythm of becoming and the felt pulse of the organic, so waking consciousness comes to the full awareness of space, extended only through the experience of death. At that moment, man first realizes his immense loneliness in the universe, the episodic nature of his existence. The animal lives in a pure present and dies without knowledge of the fact, but for man life is a short span between birth and death.

The enigma of Time first appears, the realization of limits, of the transitoriness of existence. Therefore the first manifestation of higher thought occurs as a meditation upon death.

Man rebels at the thought of the episodic nature of life, at its mystery and his loneliness in the universe. The enigmatic which ever threatens the existence of primitive man begins to be mastered by the act of naming objects, which serves as a limitation and an assertion of supremacy. The wish to

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 84

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transcend mortality develops into the process of conjuring the world, achieved under the aspect of cult by the religious soul and under that of technique in an age the numina of which are expressed in theory.

In primitive societies the enigmatic is conquered by religion, which requires forms, the knowledge of which is restricted and whose rites must be exact. As a function of the soul's depth experience, religion contains the grand myth of each culture, the actualization of its prime symbol, expressed in the upward-striving forceful God of the Gothic, the spirit of God hovering in the cave-world of the Magian soul, the statuesque body of the Apollinian.<sup>1</sup>

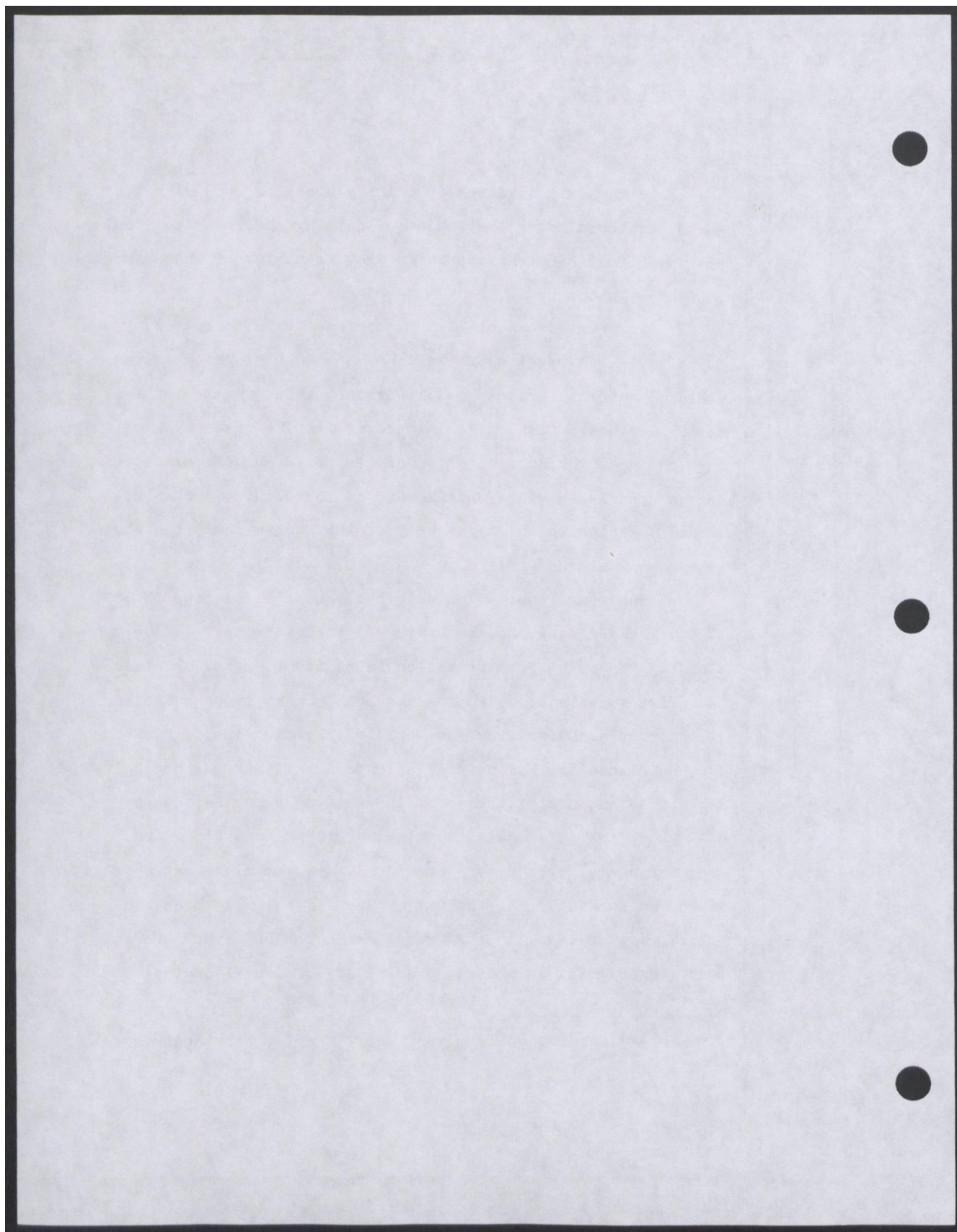
The reactions, which originally were total tend to become permeated by an understanding of significances. Understanding separated from sensation is called thought. Profane causality appears, supplanting the holy causality of religion, in order to withdraw from the world of becoming the data which it then dissects. Yet natural science is neither new nor self-contained, but a consequence of the religious world-picture that preceded it, all its theories merely an analysis - and even a rebuttal presupposes an object - of the lived metaphysics of the culture's youth. No matter how far natural science advances, at its edge, in the inexplicable residue, ever hovers God as everything beyond the possibility of causal analysis.

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1. For explanation of term see post. Chapter "The Souls of Each Culture".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 86

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The insolvable dilemma of time emerges: each act is unique, yet science must postulate on endless comparability of phenomena. The world reveals a process of eternal becoming, but causality can operate only on the become. The realm of becoming knows only singularly occurring facts, the world of pure being operates with eternal truths. The conflict of rhythm against tension, destiny against causality permeates existence and history.

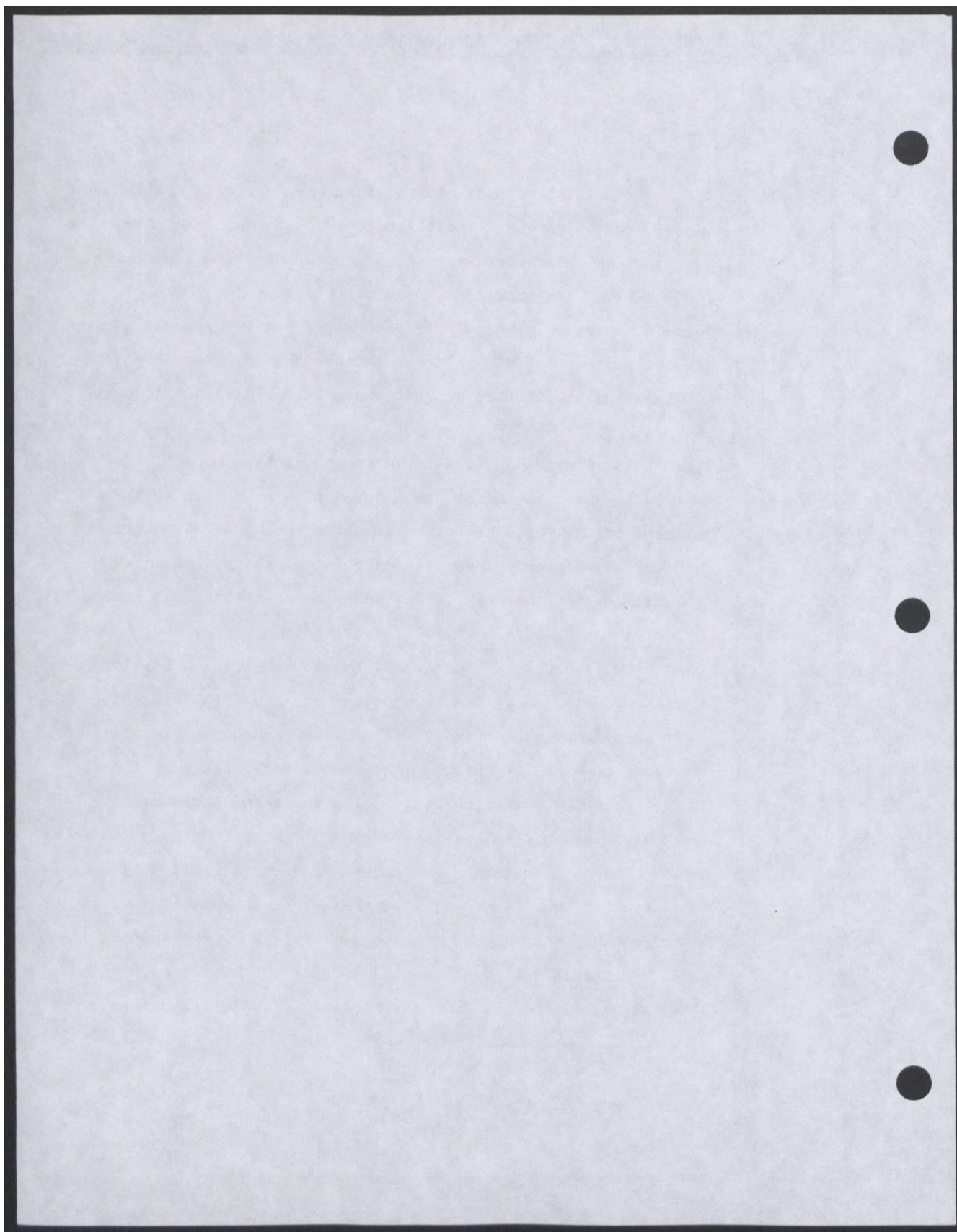
Two pictures of the world are possible: the World-as-History in which the become is ordered with reference to the becoming or the World-as-Nature in which the opposite occurs. The World-as-History presents a dynamic process of growth with the will-to-live the only criterion of success, the only source of motivation. In this world of facts only subjects and objects exist. To live for abstractions involves suffering a destiny instead of being one. Its chroniclers are those individuals whose physiognomic tact enables them to apprehend the totality of events in a poetic unity, with a clear realization of the insufficiency of a causal analysis. Its representatives are the great statesmen who embody the meaning of the occurrences, the men of blood who feel the cosmic beat and actualize it. "I feel myself driven towards an end that I do not know", Napoleon stated at the beginning of the Russian campaign. "As soon as I shall have reached it an atom will suffice to shatter me. Till then not all the forces in the world will prevail against me."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol I. p. 144.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 88

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Yet the World-as-Nature, too, has its triumphs. Its linkages represent man's attempt at attaining mastery over his destiny. It can achieve in its highest form liberation and freedom from the world-born fear which is the lot of waking consciousness, the Ego's loneliness in the face of impassable boundaries. It is ever the task of religion to fight against the powers of the blood, to withdraw from the world into ascetism, to realize the necessity of tension and in the end finally to love it. "Morality is a planned causality of conduct"<sup>1</sup> of eternal validity and by definition applicable even if man did not exist.<sup>2</sup> The saint must realize, however, that his victories are not of this world. If he wants temporal success the logic of events forces him to use political weapons.<sup>3</sup> The meeting of Pilate and Christ constitutes Spengler's poetic representation of this dilemma. The Roman asked "What is truth?" And in that question expressed the self-confidence of the State, the pride of eminent fitness, the entire meaning of history. And the answer, not indeed spoken but implicit in the actions of the prisoner was: "What is actuality?"

This contains the final differentia between the two form-worlds, between becoming and being, destiny and causality, history and nature. Becoming with waking consciousness as its

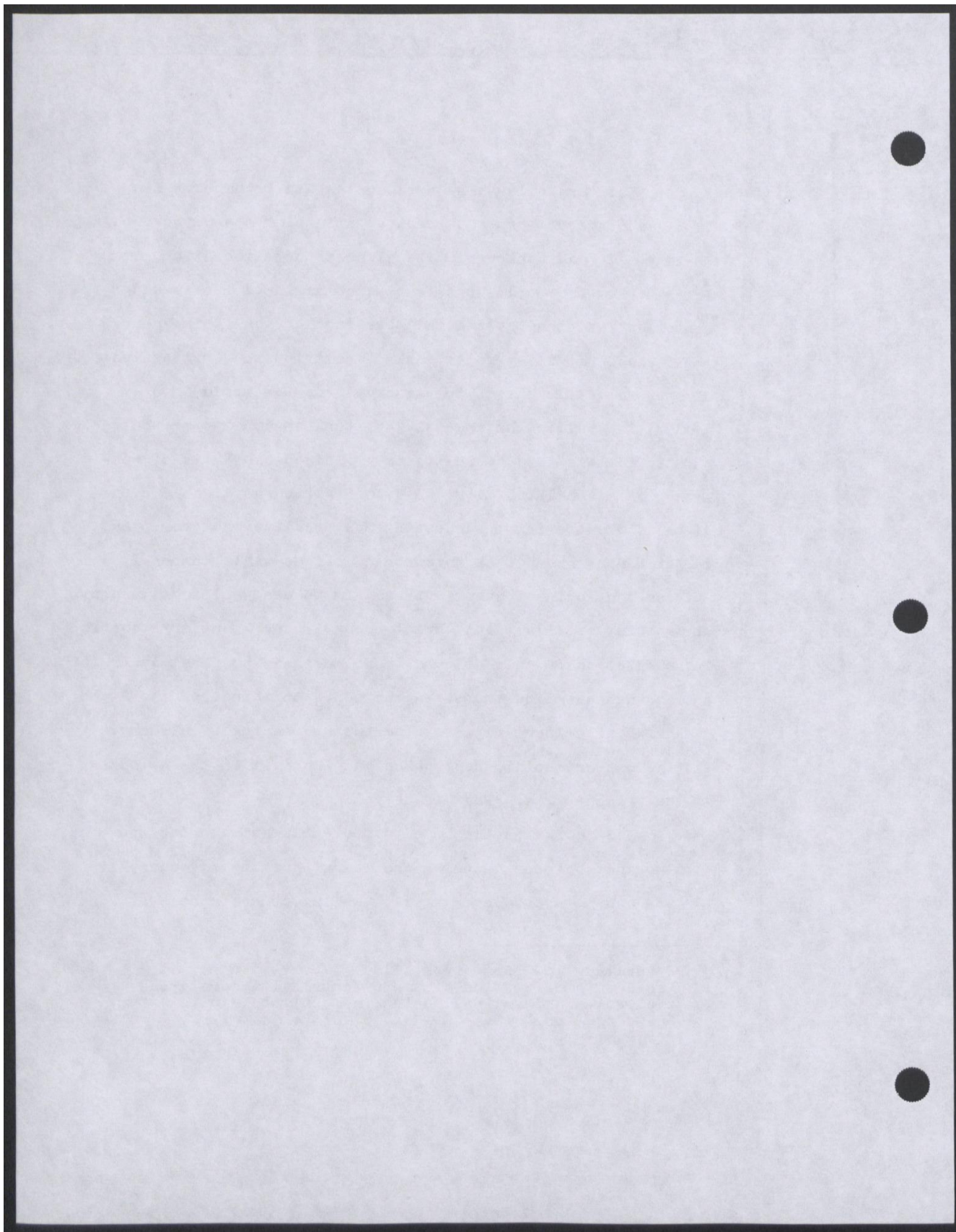
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1. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 270.

2. See Kant's definition of the categorical imperative as applied to all rational being, not only to Man.

3. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 216.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 90  
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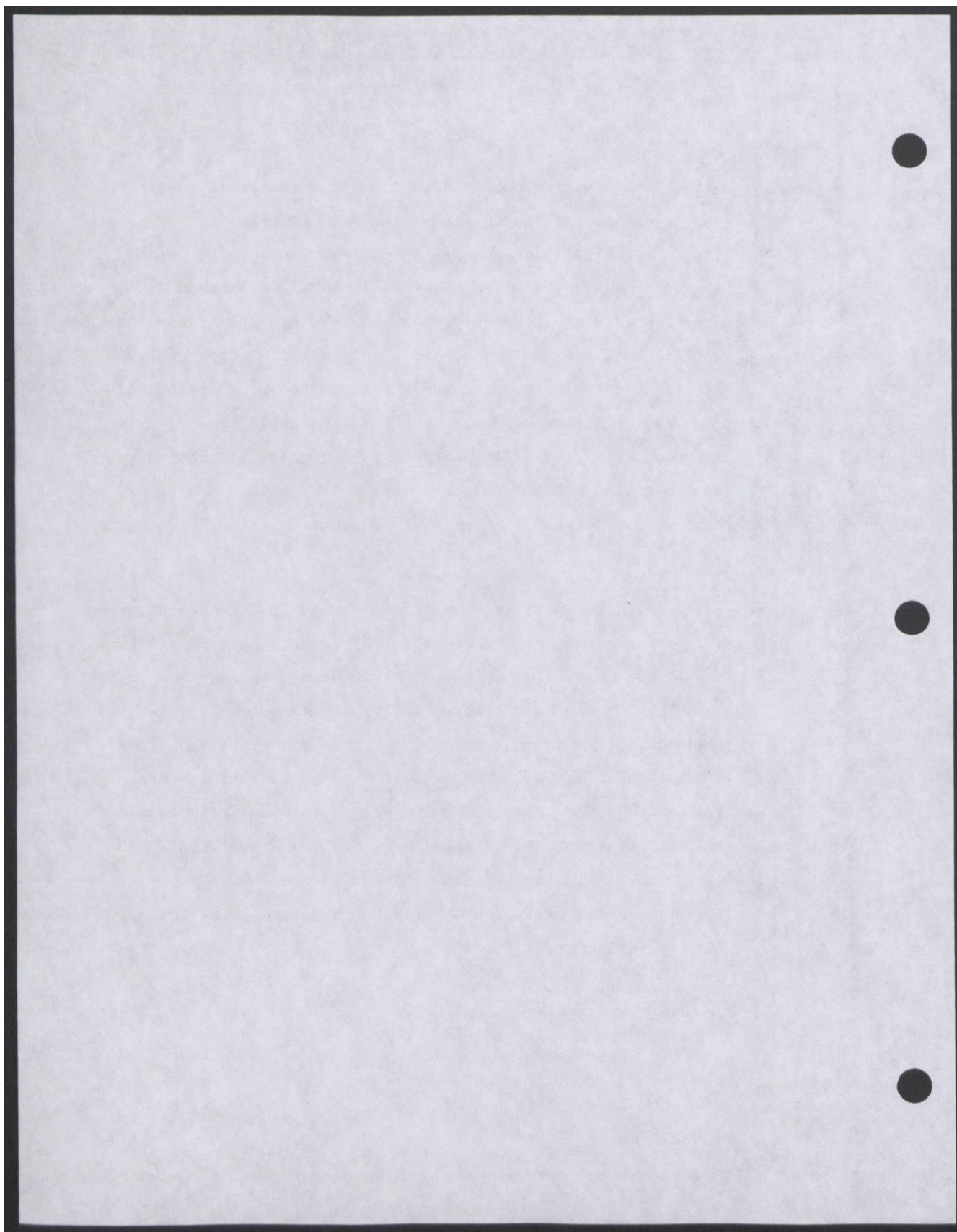
subject, or a waking-being that attempts to dominate destiny are the essence of the antinomy, the real alternatives of life. The politician despises the thinker and dreamer - and rightly. For the believer all worldly ambition is sham and deception - he too is right. "A ruler who attempts to improve religion in the direction of practical, worldly purposes is a fool. A sociologist-preacher who tries to bring peace, forgiveness, righteousness and peace into the world of actuality is a fool also. No faith has yet altered the world and no fact can rebut a faith <sup>1</sup> ..... Let a man be either a hero or a saint, for between lies, not wisdom, but banality." <sup>2</sup>

Spengler resolved the dilemma of our experience of freedom and our knowledge of necessity into a postulate of alternatives. The opposition of becoming and being, the tension between Destiny and Causality, constitutes the metaphysical basis of Spengler's philosophy of history. The actualization of the immanent pulse achieves its highest form as long as its direction is taken for granted. Waking-consciousness achieves a gradual dominance only by reducing the lived experience of the cosmic beat. Finally man is adrift in a world whose purpose is no longer his own. The Culture turns into a Civilization, petrifies and dies.

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1. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 216.
  2. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 274.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 92

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 93

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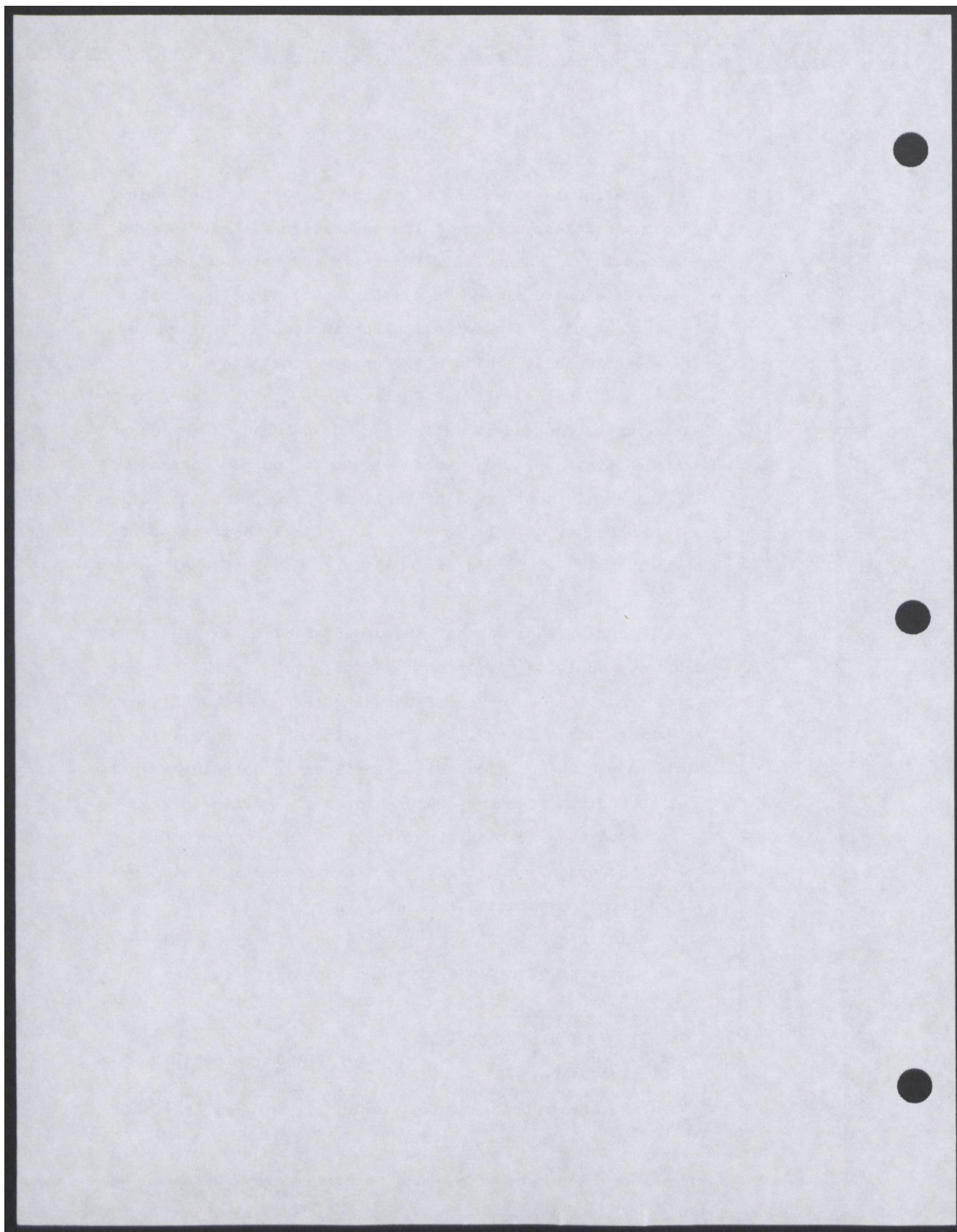
The imaginativeness of this philosophy can not hide its inner complexities, however. The opposition of becoming and being, Destiny and Causality, Necessity and Freedom seems to reduce existence to a mere vegetating. But necessity explains only past actions. Its actualization in conduct requires a waking-consciousness, which moreover operates with the inner conviction of choice. If the Cultures are distinguished by their struggle for the actualization of an idea,<sup>1</sup> then the specificity of history resides in an element of purposiveness, not in an inexorable destiny. The World-as-History and the World-as-Nature are, after all, merely metaphysical abstractions for the apprehension of events, not objective modes of real occurrences.<sup>2</sup>

Spengler implies that the man-of-fact lives a destiny and thereby achieves his triumphs. But, again, this does not seem to prove the dominance of becoming over being, of History over Waking-consciousness. The recognition of the immanence depends on waking-consciousness. Instinct is no guide to political conduct. Effective leadership is always forced-whatever its motives - to represent itself as the carrier of ideas, embodying purposes. All truly great achievements in history resulted from the actualization of principles, not from the clever evaluation of political conditions.<sup>3</sup> Only plants are pure pragmatists. The Causality which motivates man is an

1. Spengler op. cit., Vol. I., p. 54.
2. See post Ch. "History and Man's Experience of Morality for full Discussion."
3. One may, of course, define all actuality as necessary and then all events become functions of an inexorability. - See post Conclusions.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 94

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experience of freedom, not derived from the physical world but from a personal, mystic relationship to the Infinite.<sup>1</sup>

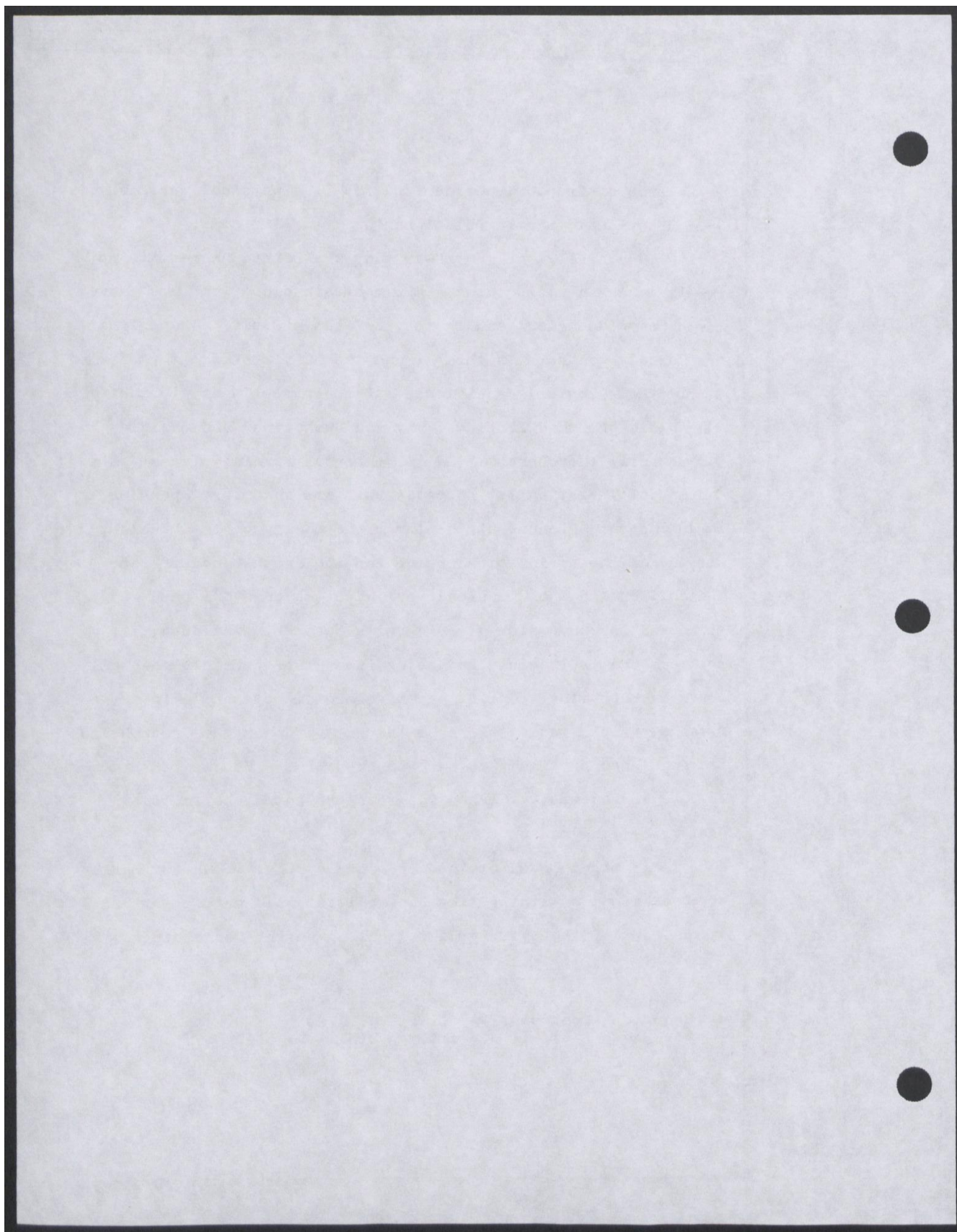
Conversely the man-of-truths, the saint, represents not merely waking-consciousness. "To restrain blood, one must have blood" says Spengler<sup>2</sup> and thereby refutes himself. What gives the majesty to Christ's thought and the driving force to Mohammed is not their logical consistency but their pertinency to the very basis of human longing. Why was Hus burned and why did Luther split the church? What is the real meaning of the triumph of Christianity? Because the time was ripe, Spengler would answer. Because at the time, the coming of the Messiah, the end of the world, the longing for the brotherhood of man had obliterated the Classical world-feeling and thus each man expressed in conversion his own religiousness. Yet does this not mean that self-contained being is no more possible than all-pervasive becoming? Christ may have been like a child in a strange, remote world. Perhaps the sentry under the Cross heard His anguished cry that God had forsaken him.<sup>3</sup> Yet it was not, as Spengler asserts, the sentry who represented the facts of history but the man on the Cross.

It might be maintained, of course, that if Christ had never existed, something like his beliefs would have triumphed in the form of the mystery cults. It is in the "something",

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1. See post. Ch. The Sense of Responsibility.
  2. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol. II. p. 272.
  3. Spengler - Vol. II op. cit. p. 215.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 96

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 97

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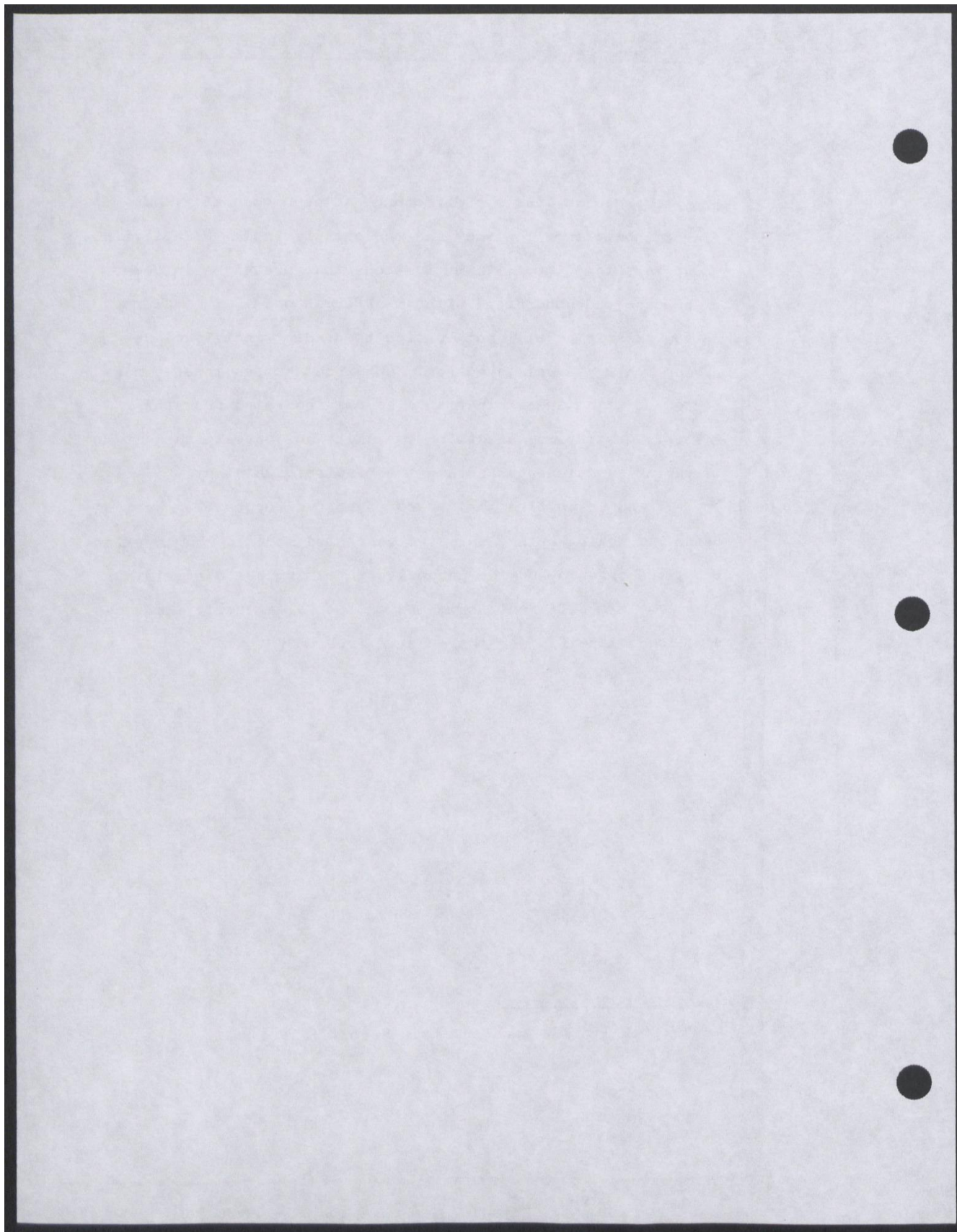
however, wherein lies the difference between necessity and freedom, between a tendency and the creative act. No activity, no society is without its motivations that are given in common experience and understood without affirmation. But equally common experience will not suffice to predict individual behavior. Every event is not only an effect but an inner experience. Yet the inner experience is not separated from the effect. Destiny may condition causality but equally the truths of waking-consciousness became the "facts" of history.

And so we find that there is no real opposition between being and waking-being, only two connected modes of human existence, the organic and the purposive<sup>1</sup>, nothing but our original question in a different form: "What is this necessity that accomplishes itself under the mode of freedom?"

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1. W. Y. Elliott - The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics - p.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 98  
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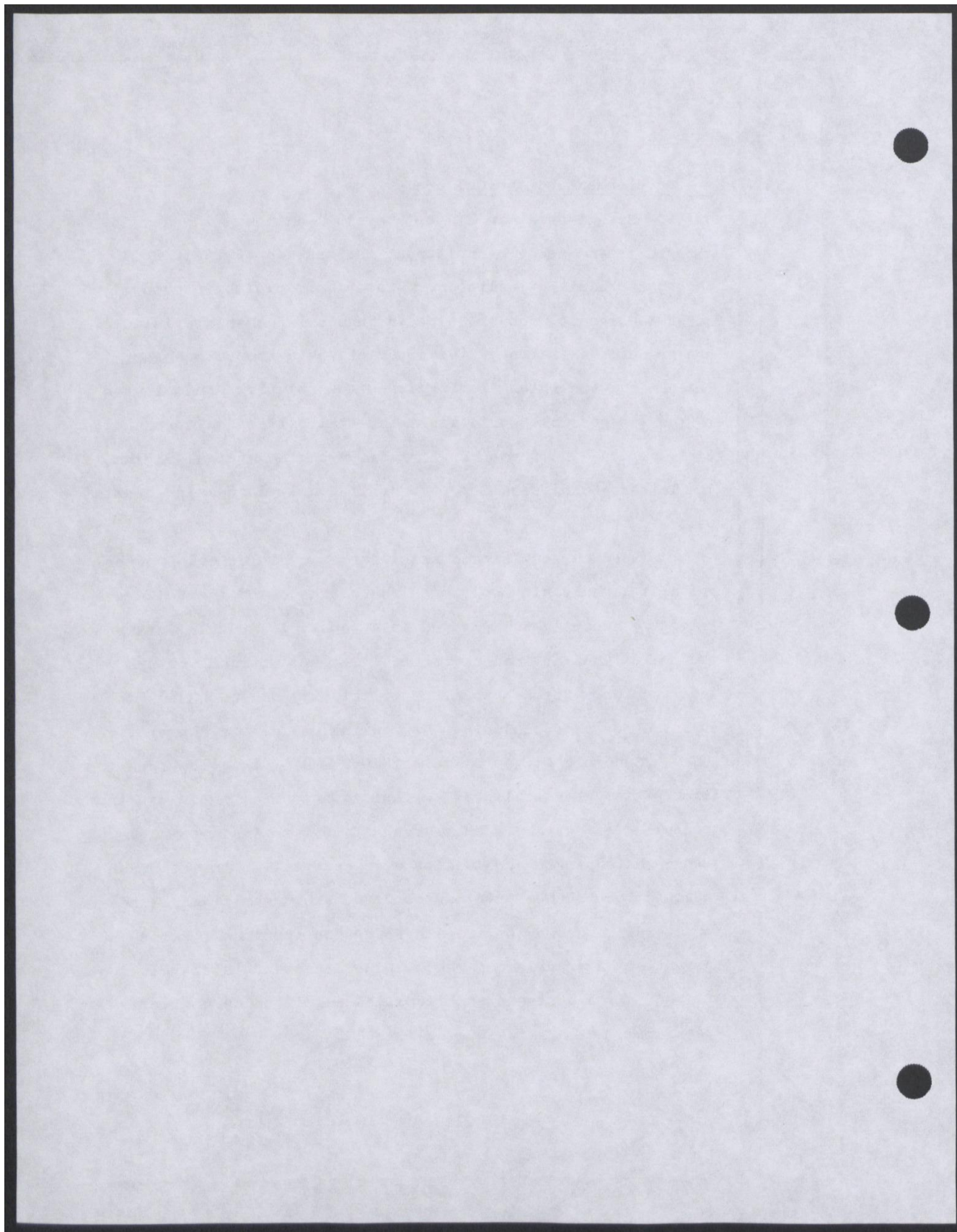
The Development of the Culture.

Spengler saw in his metaphysical antinomy the key to the growth and decay of cultures, the essence of their soul-image, the basis of politics. Historical development constitutes an organic process, its distinguishing characteristic the gradual assertion of the power of waking consciousness. The demarcation which distinguishes the relative predominance of the two possible world views is, that between culture and civilization, the former an expression of the eternal rhythm, the latter a manifestation of a continuously decreasing cosmic beat.

Spengler envisioned existence as a biological process which attains meaning only with the emergence of the Cultures. Primitive humanity was engaged in a constant struggle for mere survival. The marginal nature of life left no room for profound ideation, only for a transitory religiosity dependent on its supposed power of conjuring the lurking, enigmatic dangers.

Suddenly at approximately 3000 B.C. - there emerged the forms of the great cultures, organic beings with their own inner conception of destiny. They brought about so fundamental a change that Spengler postulates a transformation in the human constitution. Henceforth man constructs his world-image, his depth-experience no longer with reference to himself alone, but as part of an experienced whole. The degree of inter-relationship of this experience and its lived significance characterizes common membership in a culture.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 100  
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Each Culture constitutes an organic being with growth, maturity, old age and death. They awaken in a moment of infinite longing, when the fear of death, the end of the world, the dark mystery of the universe oppress everybody's heart. Such was the time when at the birth of Christ, the Magian soul attained life, when the world was full of tales of a Messiah and the Classical soul was dissipating itself in Neo-platonism and the oriental mystery cults. Such was the moment when in the years 900-1000, the end of the world seemed near and out of the confused groping of the Merovingian and Carolingian period (-Charlemagne as a "ray from Baghdad")- the upward-striving soul of the Western (Faustian)<sup>1</sup> culture emerged. At these moments, in the higher minds of the young culture, the environment suddenly coalesces into a meaningful picture. All the problems and possibilities of the future history are already immanent in the formations of those early years, in the construction of its Grand Myth.

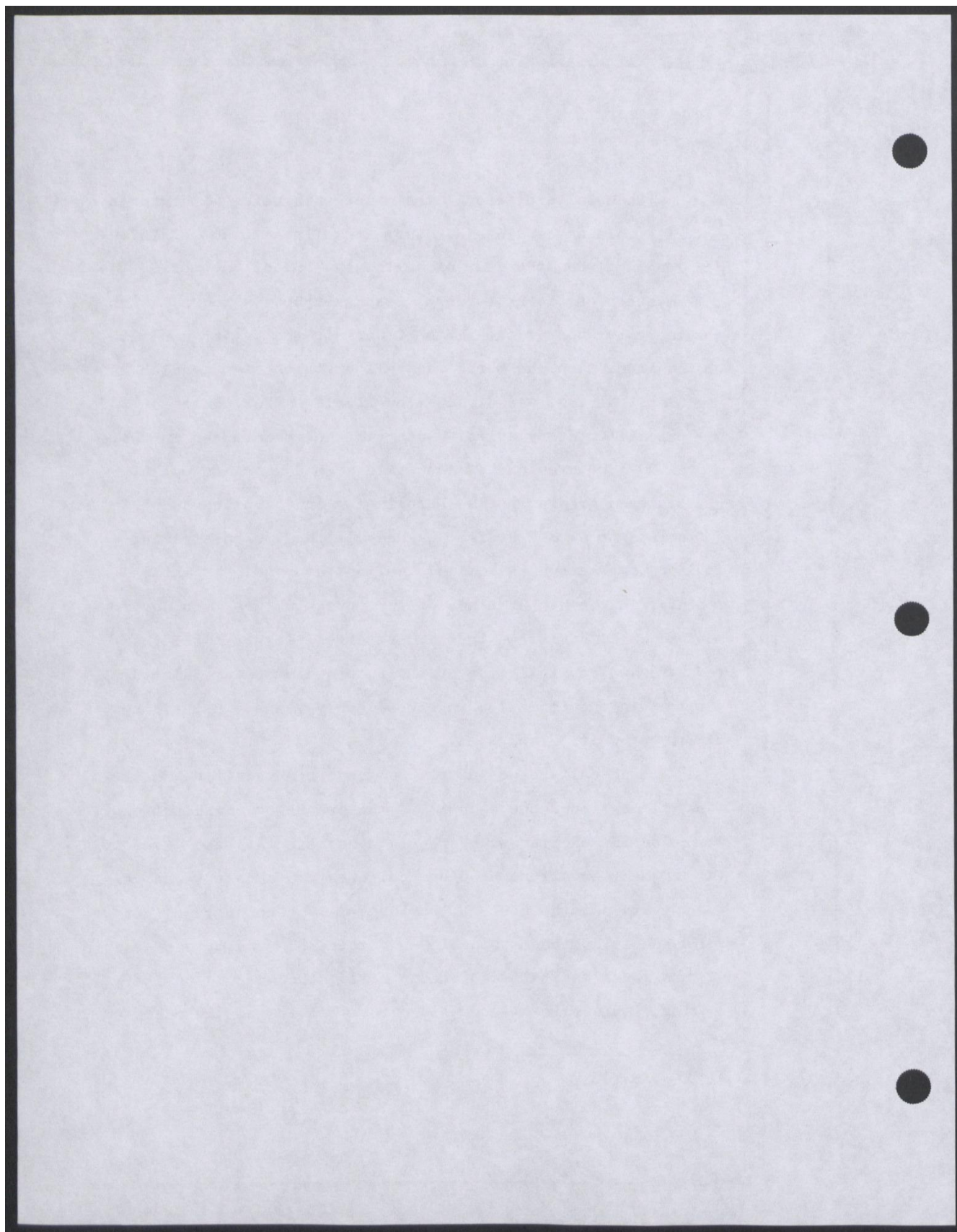
Each culture begins with a great renunciation, the refusal to take over the symbols of the preceding civilization, the selection of its own appropriate representations. Even if outward manifestations of other cultures are adopted, the very selectivity and the content ascribed will be unique, solitary and essentially incommunicable to outsiders. The myth of each culture contains its image of the world, the essence of its longing, the possibility of its nature-knowledge, the basis of

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1. See post.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 102

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 103

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its religion. All of the later history reveals a process of actualizing this idea and a fight against the forces that tend to dissolve it from within (waking-consciousness) and the material dangers of the environment. Since the birth occurs in a moment of oppressive tension, all early manifestations of human endeavor are in their essence religious. Natural science emerges only as a concomitant of the gradual self-assertion of waking-consciousness. Spengler considers both manifestations of the same phenomena. "World-knowing for the man of the higher culture is a need seen as a duty of expressing his essence."<sup>1</sup>

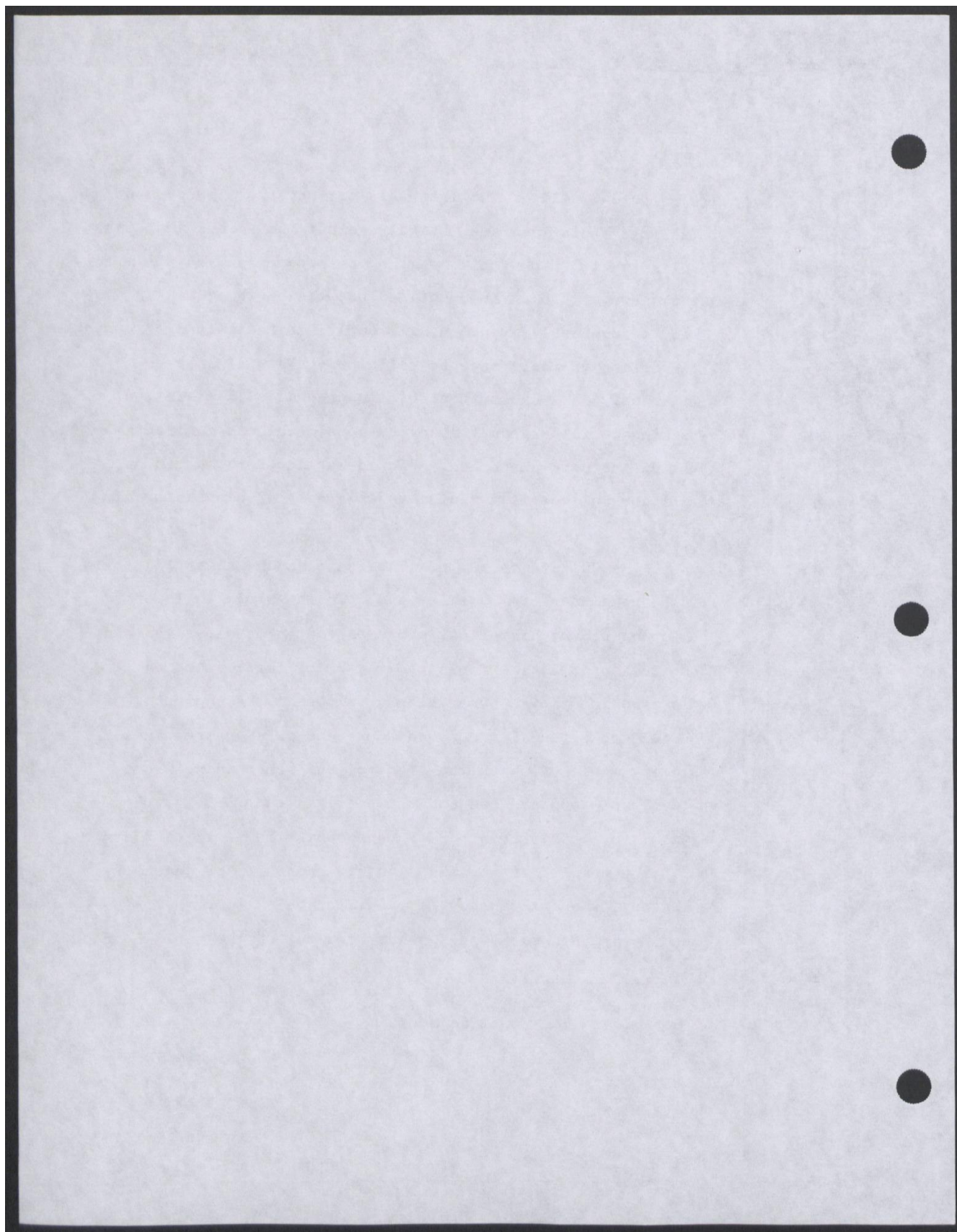
The Culture grows in a landscape and remains tied to it for the remainder of its existence. In the biological period that precedes the historical era a peasantry develops that is close to the soil, and feels the rhythm of the cosmic beat. Out of the anonymous countryside develops at the beginning of each culture a feudal order whose essence is expressed in a customary ethic of which the frame of reference is not good and evil but good and bad and whose stigma attaches to vulgarity not sin.<sup>2</sup> This aristocracy represents the world of facts and of the meaning of what is about to happen. The peasantry is history, the aristocracy makes history.

A priesthood, too, appears born out of the world-fear

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1. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol I - p. 99.
  2. See post. The Faustian Soul.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 104

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 105

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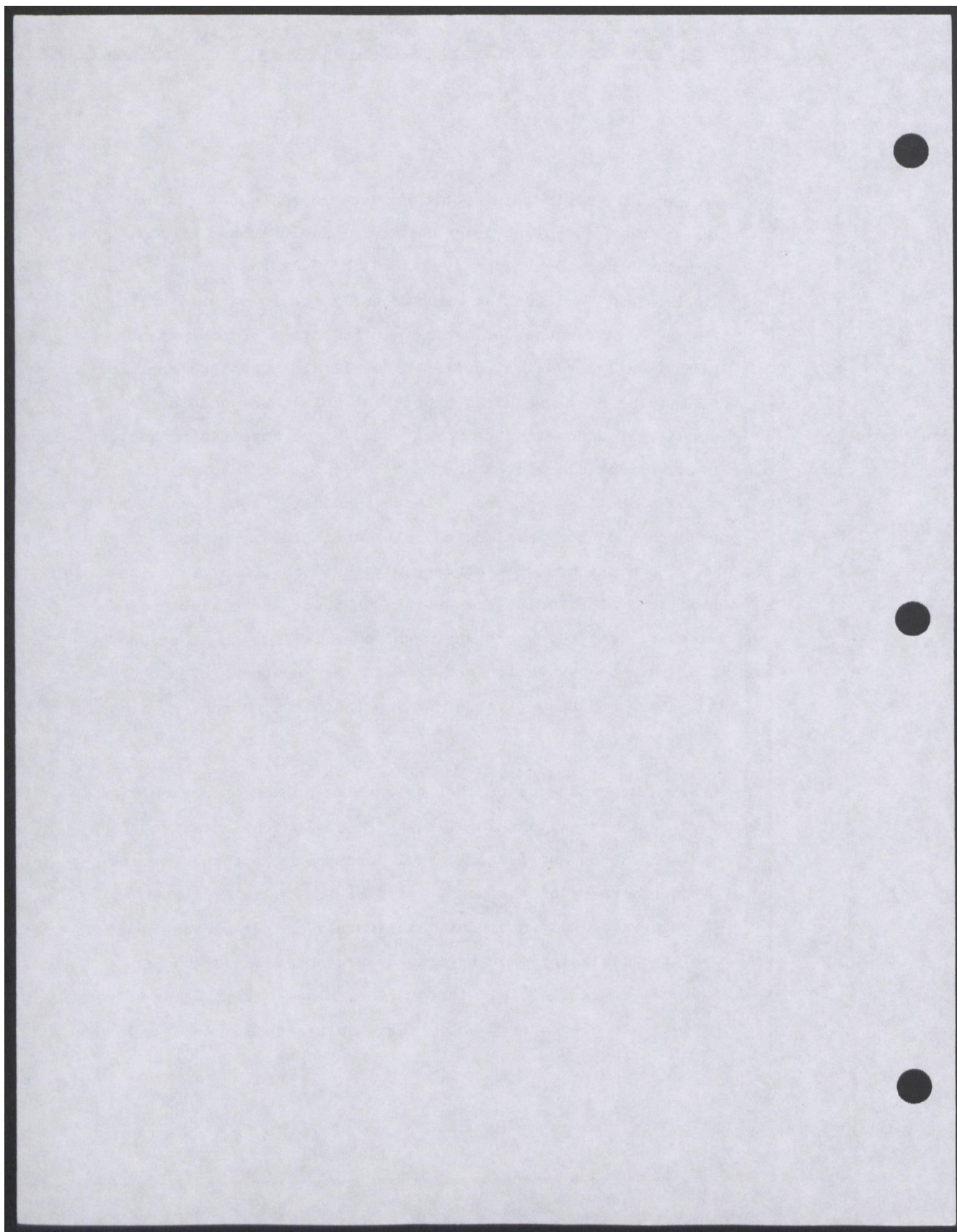
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of the early period, the mediator between man and the other that is felt as enigmatic. The style and influence of that priesthood depends on the symbol of the culture and its depth experience. The Faustian man, a lonely ego in a world of infinite extent, whose God as the manifestation of omnipotent force is all pervasive, buffeted on all sides by the terrible fear of the devil requires a powerful priesthood and the possibility of understanding forgiveness. The Appollinian soul, in all essentials almost the exact opposite of the Faustian, with its feeling for pure presence, against the background of a Golden Age, its passionate denial of infinity, of necessity felt the existence of a strong priesthood as a danger and none developed. The Magian cave-world, in which the divine pneuma hovers uneasily over man who might ever fall to the forces of evil and whose salvation consists in the consensus of the believers produces a type of nation that is a church.

The existence of the Spring-time culture represents a lived metaphysics, each of its manifestations a tentative groping towards the knowledge it will have during its noon. But soon the harmony of the countryside begins to be disturbed by the emergence of towns. Initially merely market-places-though primitive peasantry ever regards even technical mastery of nature with mixed awe and terror (f.e. blacksmiths) - they develop into places from which the countryside is henceforth

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 106

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<sup>1</sup>  
felt as environs. This is the age when scholasticism appears, a presumption for the permanence of the world.

The growth of the city involves the emancipation of the intellect. The liberated waking-consciousness begins the process of dominating the organic factor, until with the complete destruction of the great focus, a shapeless Caesarism rules all problemation.<sup>2</sup> Formerly knowledge was faith supported but with the growing assurance of its powers it becomes faith controverted. The countryside fights a losing battle against the city which represents the focus of events - in the political field against democracy, in the spiritual against nationalism, in the economic against money.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of the city is critical and practical. Life which used to be lived out of the self-evidence of its meaning develops into a calculation of utilitarian purposes. The great tradition itself becomes questionable.

Spengler finds the same tendencies in the religious field. The political requirements of a growing culture had involved faith in the affairs of the world-of-facts. The ascetic spirit, that sees the purpose of religion in the negation of the life of this world, in the restraining of the blood, that opposes the timeless love of God to the love of the senses, rouses itself to a final effort. Reformation stands at the end, not at the beginning, of a religious development. But where the early

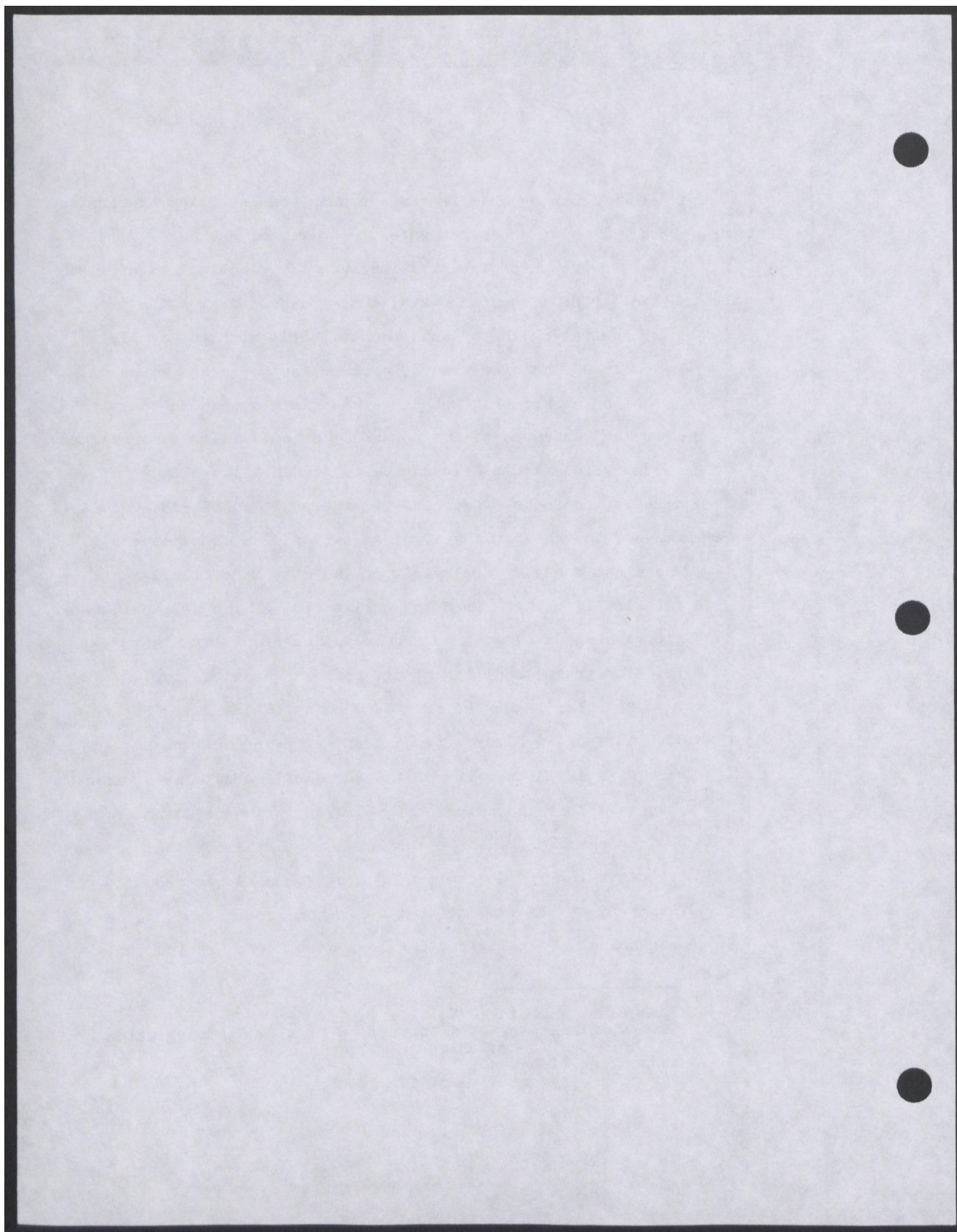
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1. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 91.

2. Note similarity of this concept to Plato's disintegration of the Republic, which begins with an assertion of a questioning selfishness.

3. Spengler - op. cit. - Vol II. p. 97.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 108  
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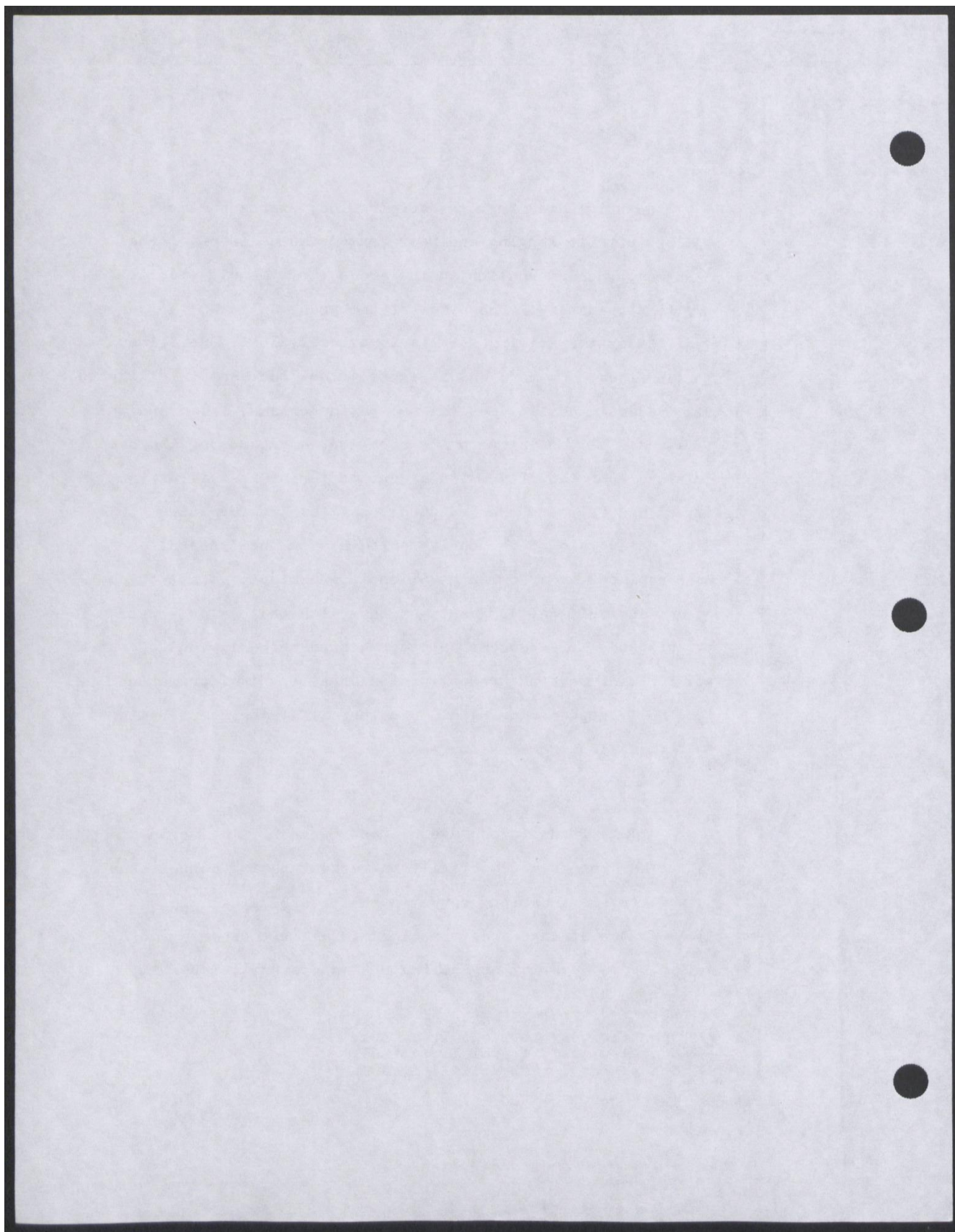
religion originated from the countryside, expressed the optimism of infinite longing and represented the pulse of eternal becoming, the Reformation is the product of the city, cold, brilliant, austere. The bliss of the young Culture, the peace typified by the smiling Mary is irrevocably lost. Religious fervor rises once more but it expresses now the hard intelligence, the "pedantic ecstasy" of the Neo-Phythagoreans, Islam and the Puritans.<sup>1</sup> It holds on to its creation, a product of the deep inwardness of the city, with a sort of terror lest it prove unreal and is therefore impatient, pitiless, unforgiving.<sup>2</sup> The lived metaphysic of the early period has in the Independent<sup>3</sup> been replaced by a common devotion to a concept, a set of abstract and critical judgments on the faith that is no longer experienced. Life becomes a comprehended mechanics out of which all Puritans develop predestination as a technical guarantee for the triumph of the elect. Another fifty years and rational criticism alone remains supreme.

This leads to the age of the Megalopolis, the world-as-city, the acme of a temporarily triumphant waking-consciousness. The countryside has long reverted to its biological state. It gazes on the strange creation of human art with uncomprehending hatred. Such is the feeling of Dostojevski towards St.

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 301.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 301.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 302.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 110

**Image ID:** 15212899



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Petersburg, which he felt "could vanish one day with the morning mist".<sup>1</sup> All the thought and decisions of life are concentrated in the Cosmopolis. The spirit of the city is coldly practical. Philosophy frees itself from its dependence on religion and submits the whole universe including religion, to epistemological criticism. "In the period of growth life revealed itself, the city-period has life as an object".<sup>2</sup> It is symbolized by the deep spirituality of Pascal against the shallow utilitarianism of Mill. Life is no longer lived as something self-evident but becomes a problem of maximum happiness. Each culture develops at this stage its own mode of spiritual extinction.

The Apollinian soul, its ideal pure body, with the opposition of Ent and Non-Ent, its tragedy of the senseless incident buffeting man by the blind threads of Tyche; with the hero's only possibility consisting of the grand gesture develops Stoicism, a purging of the soul of whatever is alien to it, so that it emerges in its pure statuesque bodiliness.

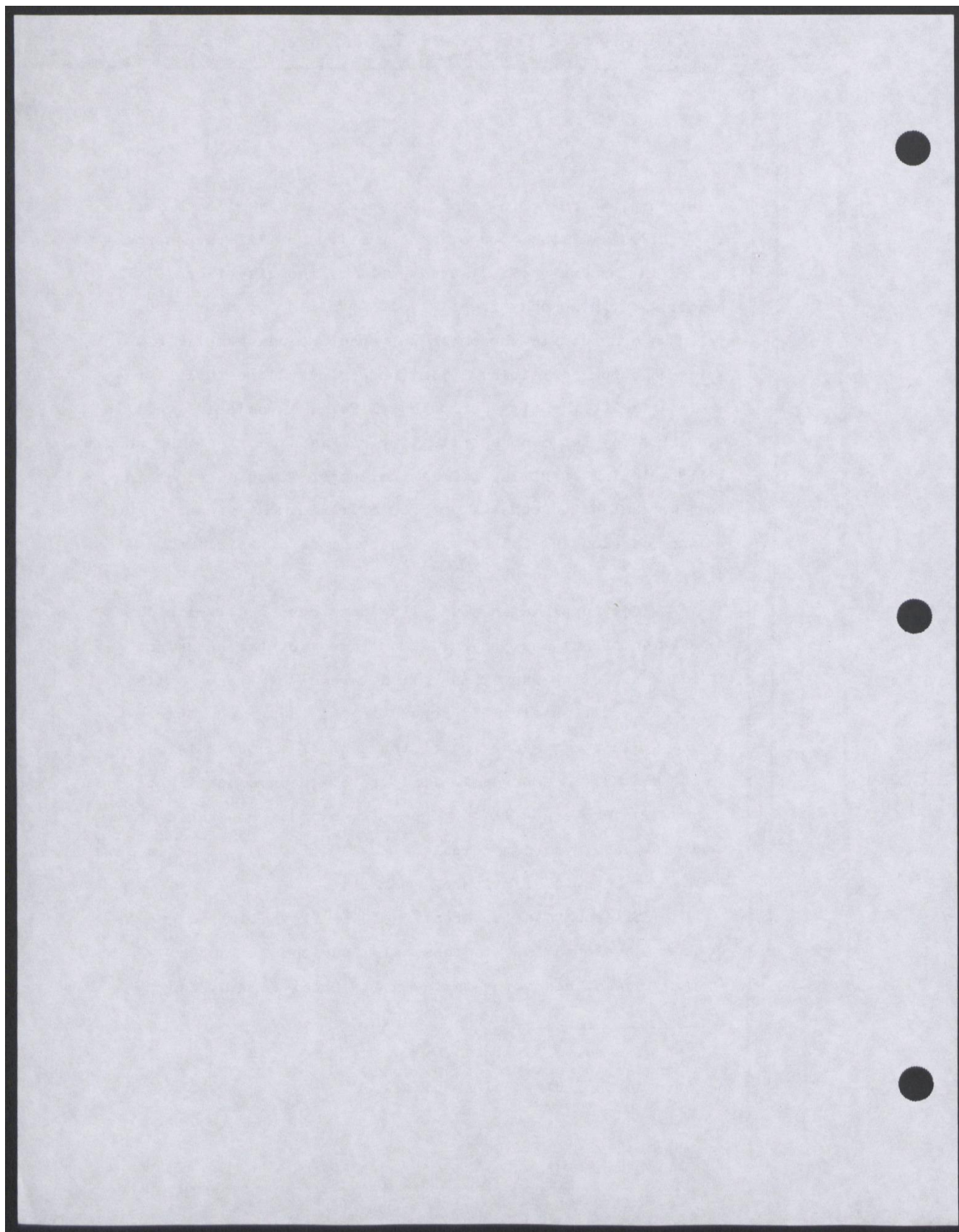
The Western will-to-power, its expression ever a commanding imperative, completes the materialization of its soul, by the mechanistic solution of Socialism.<sup>3</sup>

Philosophy in the great style is finished. No great thinkers developed in the Classical after the Stoics, and Western thought has been stated in its final form by Kant.

1. Spengler op. cit. p. 193.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol I. p. 365.
3. Spengler op. cit. Vol I. p. 341.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 112

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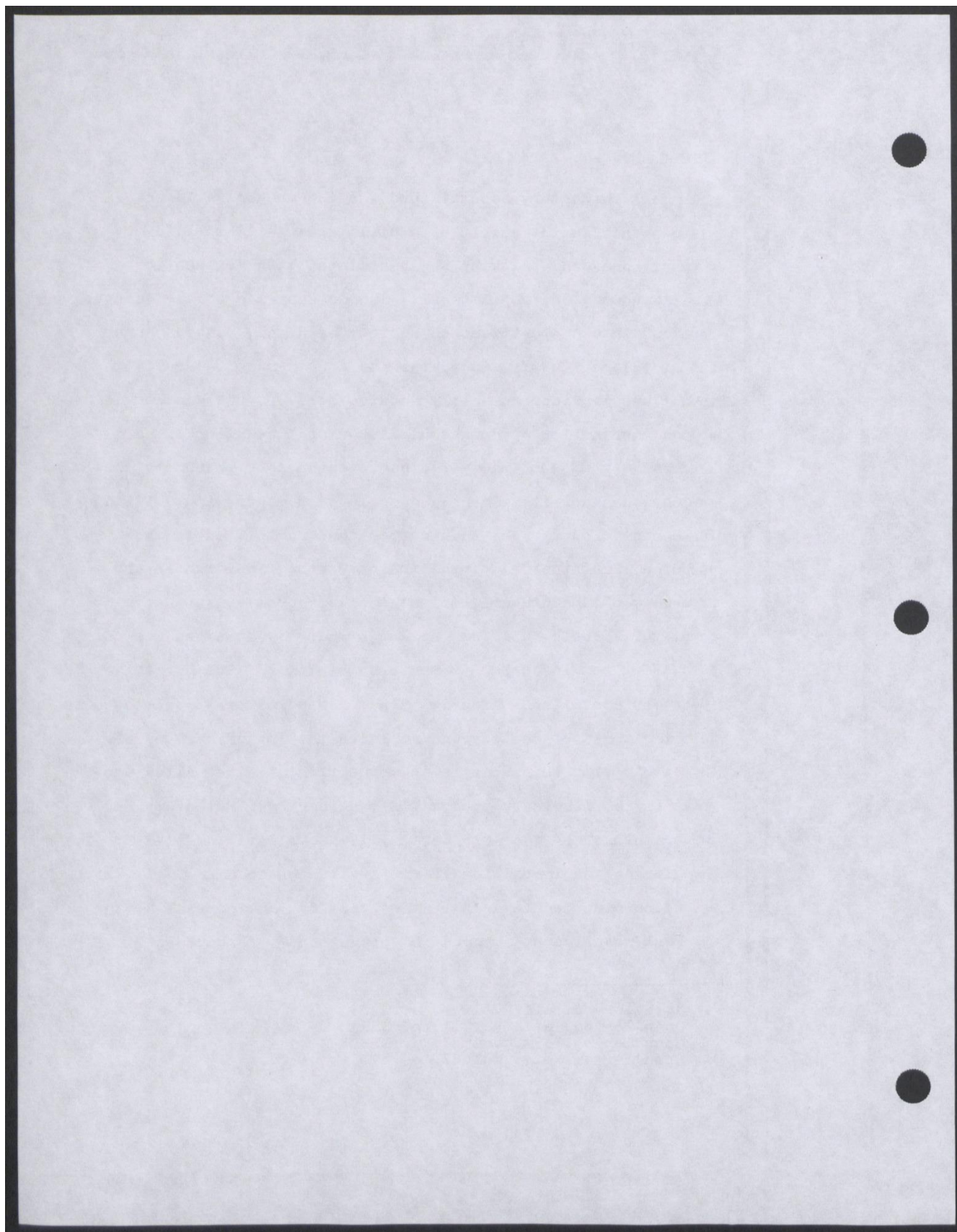


All the 19th century accomplished was the mechanization of his concepts in the spirit of a utilitarian will-to-life. Formerly profound thinking was associated with mathematics, now it becomes socio-political. The metaphysics of the Baroque develops into the critique of society of Hegel, Schoppenhauer and Nietzsche. Dimly man yearns for a return to Nature. It is not the landscape of early Gothic, however, but the conceptual definition of Rousseau, the natural relation of Marx. Kant had a vision of the world as appearance or phenomena, but to Schoppenhauer it is merely a brain-phenomenon with utilitarian connotations.<sup>1</sup> The change from the tragic view to the plebeian, from the felt intuition of Goethe, from the inward necessity of Shakespeare, to the frog-perspective<sup>2</sup> of Marx is complete. "Poets build but no longer sing, shapes are called into being not to be but to prove something."<sup>3</sup> The Darwinian theory of evolution, which imports the Manchester School theories into the world of destiny and replaces the inward harmony of the Gothic with the mechanistic conception of Aims called progress is the necessary product of that period. But every deeper thinker of the 19th Century is Socialistic defined by Spengler as the imposition of one's views on behalf of all "with attention directed towards that welfare of mankind that Goethe and Kant never spent a moment's thought on."<sup>4</sup> Frances of

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 393.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 368.
3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 156.
4. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 370.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 114

**Image ID:** 15212903



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 115

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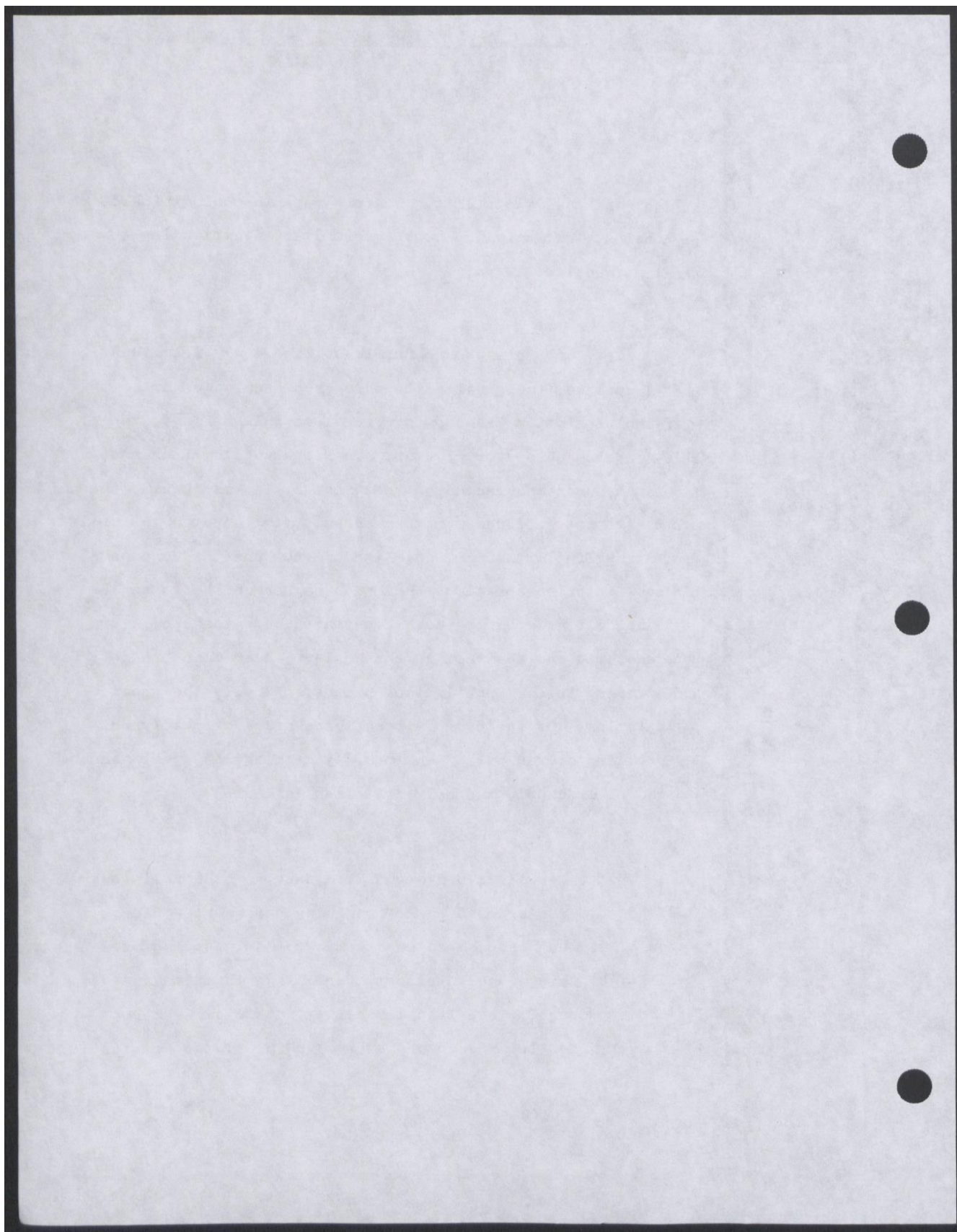
Assissi and the Saints of the Culture's youth could think of renouncing, the Socialist conceives only of distributing temporal possession.

Art, too, has become formless. The early religious self-assurance, the great style which represented a rhythm of self-implementation is becoming ever less well defined, the self-consciousness ever greater. To Michelangelo, Leonardo, Rembrandt, Bach and Beethoven the great style was an aid, the schools of art produced a high average. It liberated the artist from struggling with form, enabling him to pour the essence of his soul into the creation. But with Wagner and Pergamos the style is felt as a hindrance. Everything becomes huge, ever more esoteric and abstract in the Western, ever more ornate and hovering in the Appollinian Culture. Finally the great style is lost and instead of ideas there are continually new art-problems coaxed out of an inwardly meaningless creativeness. Instead of a school, the only criterion is taste.

Natural-science had begun by dissecting the religious world picture, both a product of man's astonishment at the motion of his universe, both an attempt to dominate the inexorability of fate. The intellect ever thinks that it has mastered truths of eternal applicability but it can not rest until every question has been answered and no riddle remains.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 116

**Image ID:** 15212905



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 117

Image ID: 15212906

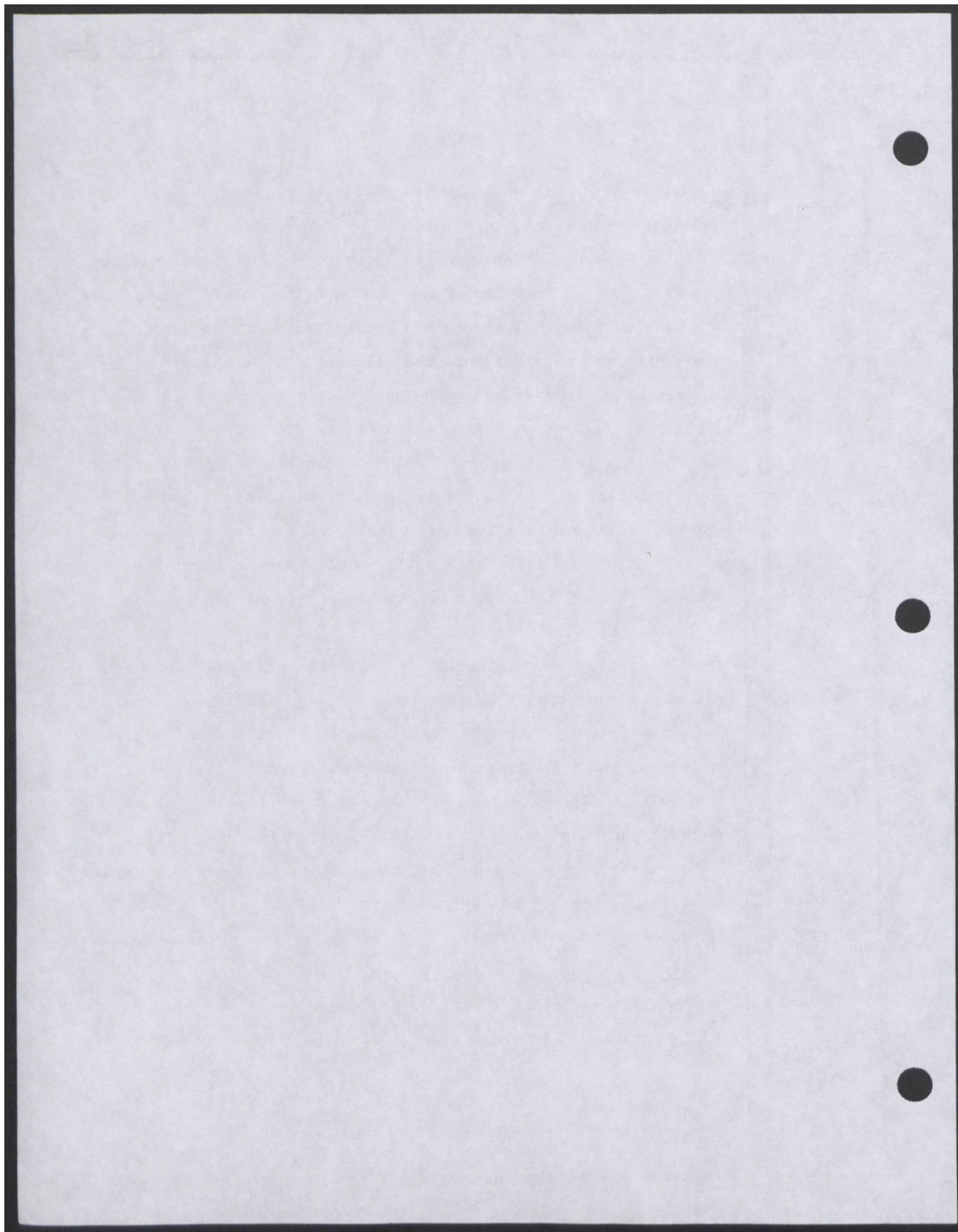
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Yet since nature is what man constructs for himself out of his depth experience, that which we are observing lives with us in the process of observation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, every scientific result is the consequence of a method and the method presupposes a belief in its conclusiveness. "Descartes meant to doubt everything but certainly not the value of his doubting."<sup>2</sup> No Western thinker would question the efficacy of empirical observation, just as no Magian scientist needs to invoke the aid of a miracle to explain phenomena not amenable to causal analysis. Thus there came into existence the Western science of dynamics with an assertive mastery over nature and the Magian alchemy which tends to wheedle its results from a substance which in the final analysis represents only a different mode of the immanently divine.

But after a period of easy optimism when both critical philosophy and scientific research reign supreme the old enigmas re-appear. That which had brought natural-science to a maximum of inner fulfillment suddenly operates as a solvent.<sup>3</sup> Each culture discovers that the ultimate questions are unanswerable causally; the problem of motion remains unresolved. Force as the source or the cause of motion represents the Western dilemma, the perfect form of substance, the causality of its movement the Classical. The hypothesis grow progressively

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 388.
  2. Spengler op. cit., Vol. II. p. 12.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 417.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 118  
**Image ID:** 15212907



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more abstract and inclusive the various fields of knowledge converge ever closer. In a moment of painful clarity it becomes apparent that amidst all the abstruseness, the ever sharper definition of conceptual quantities, which moreover like the concept of Force determine the structure of the experiment a priori, there emerges nothing but the myths of the spring-time<sup>1</sup> in modern form. Then in the grey light of the beginning civilization man realizes that the tension created by his waking-consciousness has become too great, that the quest for knowledge is without end and his tired soul plunges into the peace of the Second Religiousness.

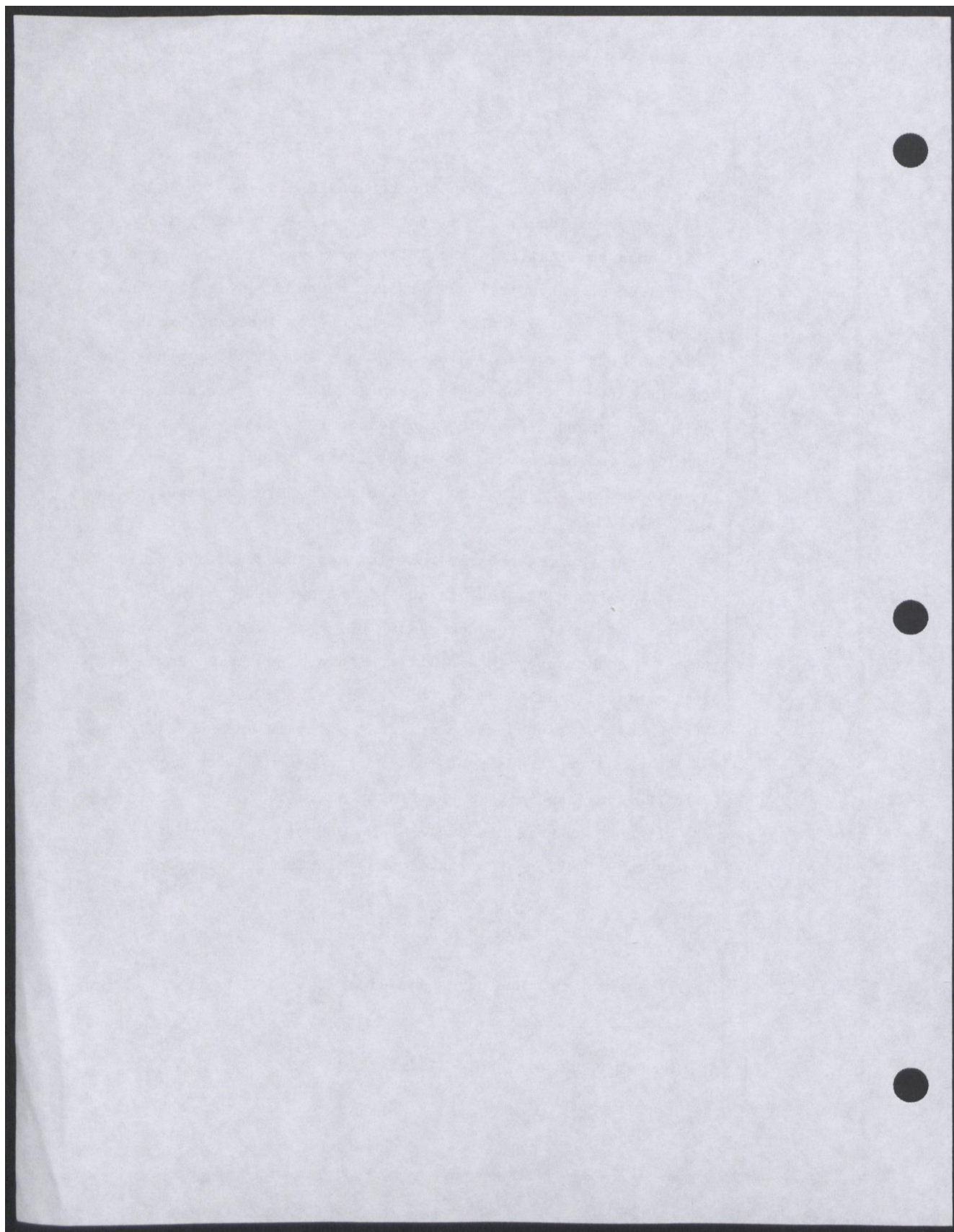
Yet where the early religion was the grand symbolism of an emerging soul, the citizen of the megalopolis with the cosmic beat in him ever decreasing clings desperately to his cults, his Theosophy, his religious fads. In the Springtime reason was felt as a support of faith, in the maturity faith was conceived as subject to critical analysis and an enlightened waking-consciousness sought to find its own position towards-life (Weltanschauung), but now faith alone is the criterion. The flight from reason prevails, the belief that there is some mystic constitution of actuality as to which formal proofs are<sup>2</sup> barren.

As the Culture turns itself into a civilization and the

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 425.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 310.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 120

**Image ID:** 15212909



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 121

Image ID: 15212910

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masses of the world-city seek to find release from the polarities in their soul in Panem et circenses, in nigger-dances and sports, Caesarism<sup>1</sup> emerges in the political organization replacing democracy which has become an empty shell and ending the dictatorship of money which is by now the real master of political life.<sup>2</sup> It represents the eventual triumph of the blood, of being, over the strained waking-consciousness of the Megapolis. Pure power, the coursing rhythm of ever-becoming re-assert themselves and despite traditional trappings, even because of them, a formless force permeates all aspects of political life.

Nothing, according to Spengler, can save the dying civilization. The sterility of all late man ensues, a metaphysical turn towards death.<sup>3</sup> The tragic symbolism which in Shakespeare could lift an incident into a destiny has in Ibsen become the problemation of social events. Woman, whom the man of the Spring-time culture conceives as the mother of his children constitutes for the Cosmopolitan a companion for life, an object for the blending of dispositions. No attempt, however frantic can arrest the decline in population. Neither the marriage laws of Augustus, nor the wholesale adoptions, nor the incessant implantation of barbarians, availed to check this process in the Hellenic world.<sup>4</sup>

1. See post Chapter: Politics, Economics, the Machine.

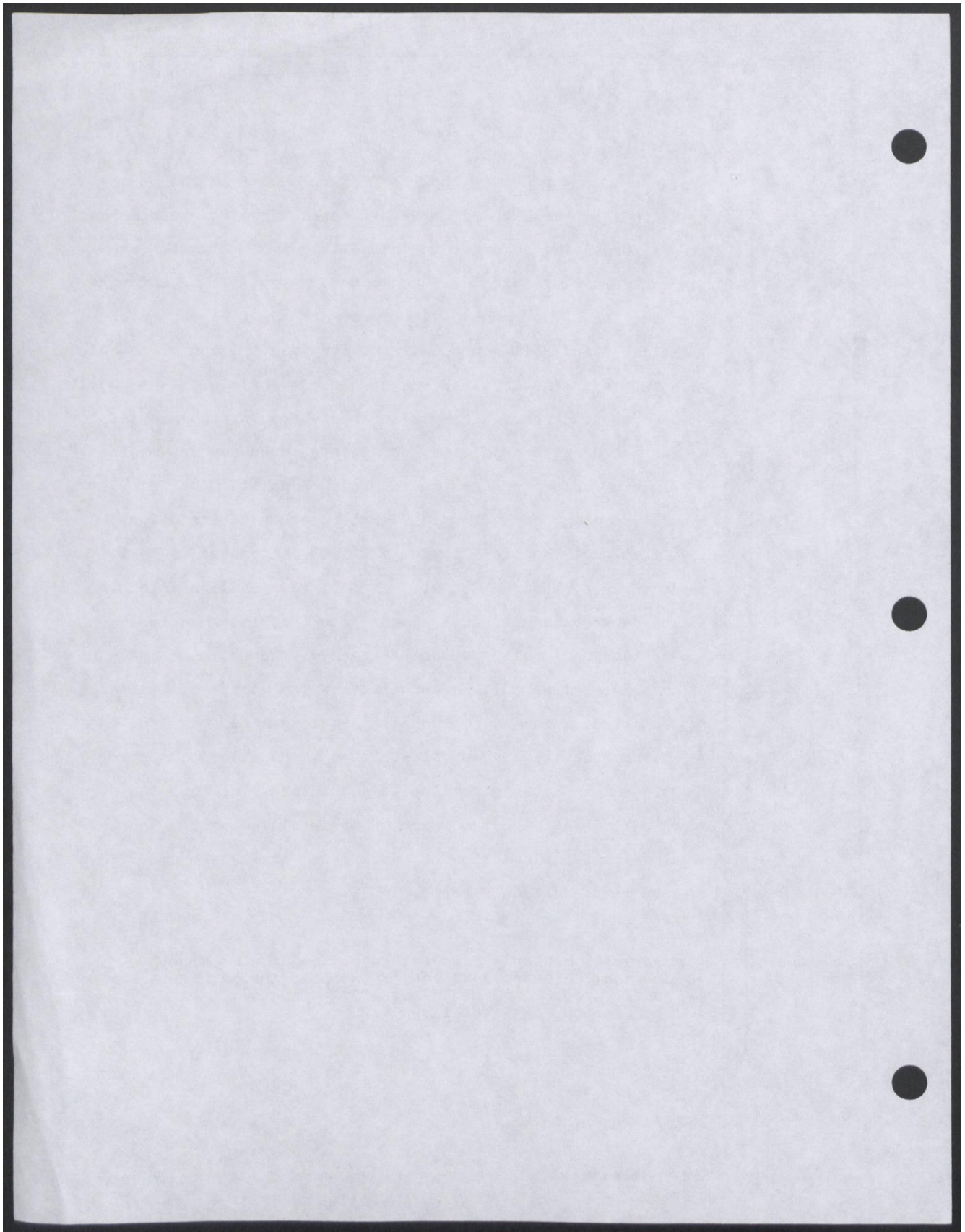
2. See post Chapter: Politics, Economics, the Machine.

3. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 105.

4. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 106.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 122

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 123

Image ID: 15212912

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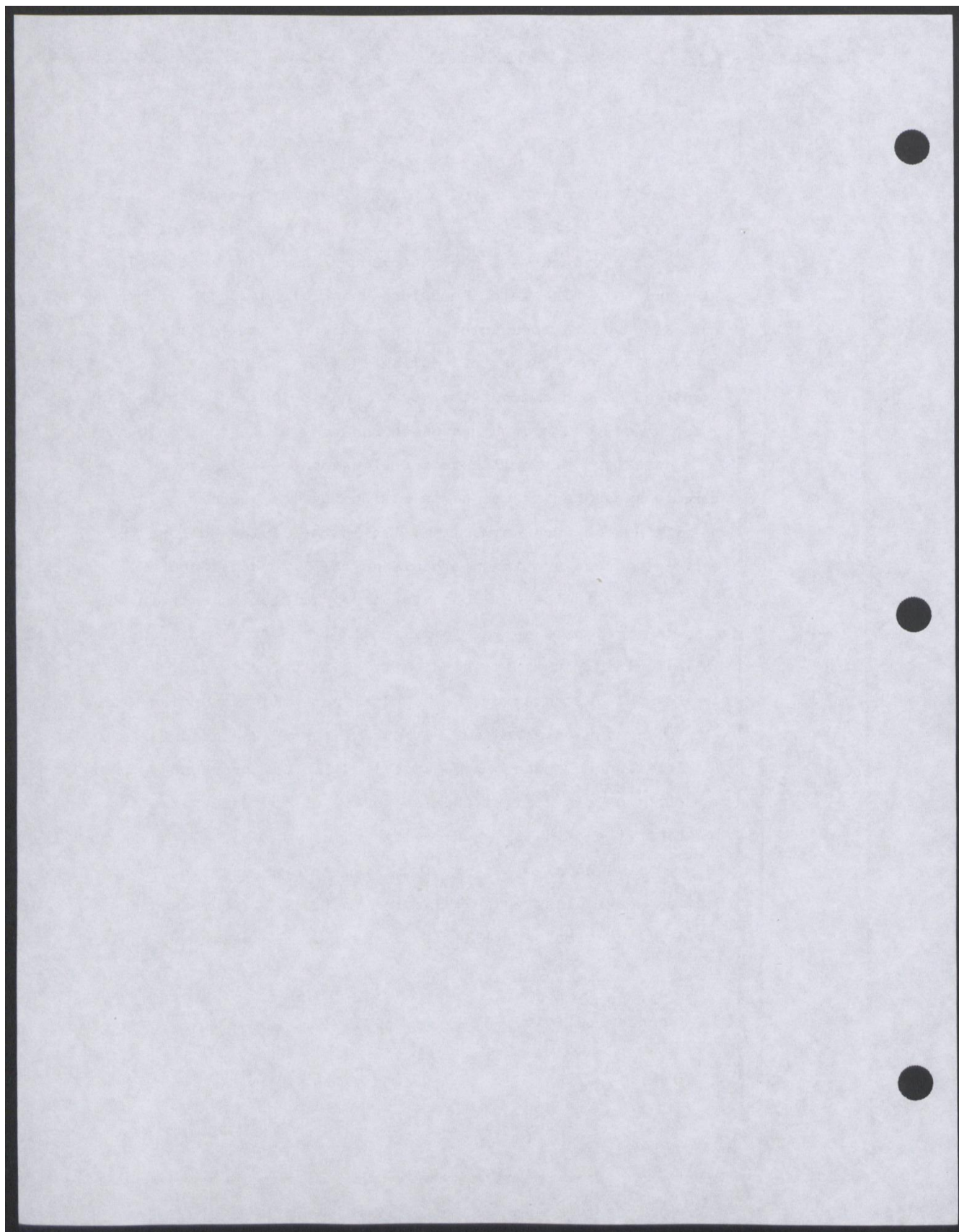
"When reasons have to be put forward in a question of life, life itself has become problematical."<sup>1</sup> The animal element, the strained waking-consciousness has eaten up the plant side and the drive into the future which binds together a sequence of generations into a purposeful organism is at an end. The population returns to a fellah-type state such as the Egyptians at the time of the Romans and the Chinese and Indians today. Here all growth has ceased and the biological sequence of generations with millenia for time-span re-emerges. Waking-consciousness has succeeded in stiffening the becoming, in petrifying the great symbolism. As in the living Culture the estate and race are in antithesis as the impersonal and the personal, so in the fellah-state the opposition is between the mass and the caste as the formal against the formless. The intellectuality, subtlety and dignity of this form world may be considerable attested by the heights from which an Indian Brahmin looks down on a Westerner. But history has ceased for the Civilization. It has become an object for Cultures and peoples who will to be a destiny and the period of contending States has left it physically and morally exhausted.<sup>2</sup>

"And so high history lays itself down weary to sleep. Man becomes a plant again, adhering to the soil, dumb and enduring. The timeless village and the eternal peasant re-appear,

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 106.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 108.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 124

**Image ID:** 15212913



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 125

Image ID: 15212914

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begetting children and burying in Mother Earth - a busy, not inadequate swarm, over which the tempest of soldier-emperors passingly blows. In the midst of the land lie the old world-cities, empty receptacles of an extinguished soul, in which a historyless mankind slowly nests itself. Men live from hand to mouth, with petty thrifts and petty fortunes and endure. Masses are trampled on in the conflict of the conquerors who contend for the power and the spoil of this world, but the survivors fill up the gap with primitive fertility and suffer on. And while in high places there is the eternal alternation of victory and defeat, those in the depth pray, pray with that mighty piety of the Second Religiousness that has overcome all doubts forever. There, in the souls, world-peace, the peace of God, the bliss of grey-haired monks and hermits is become actual-and there alone. It has awakened that depth in the endurance of suffering which the historical man in the thousand years of his development has never known. Only with the end of grand History does holy, still being reappear. It is a drama noble in its aimlessness, noble and aimless as the course of the stars, the rotation of the earth, and the alternance of land and sea, of ice and virgin forest upon its face. We may marvel at it or we may lament it - but it is there".<sup>1</sup>

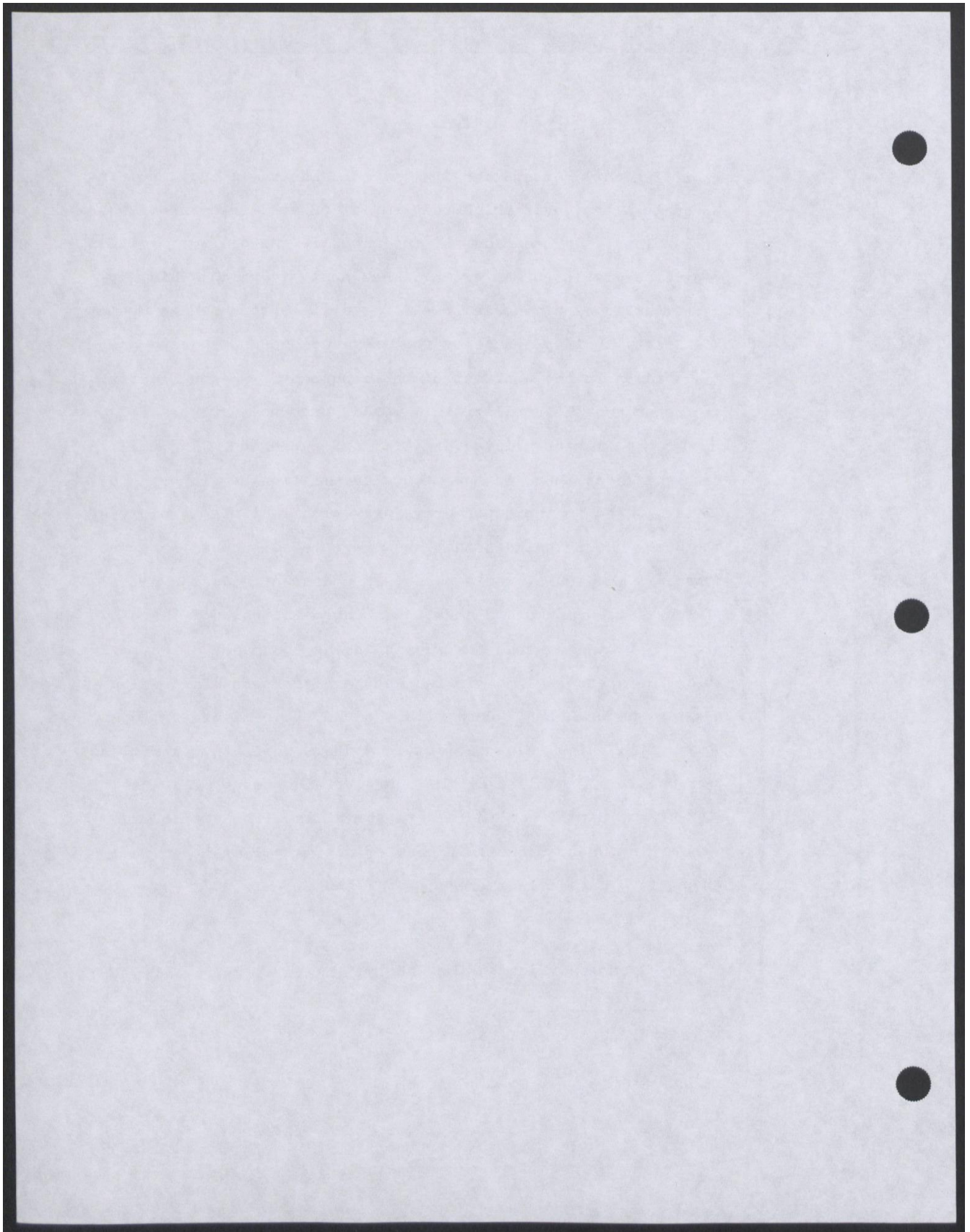
Spengler rejected the theory, that history revealed the

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1. Spengler, op. cit. Vol. II. p. 435.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 126

**Image ID:** 15212915



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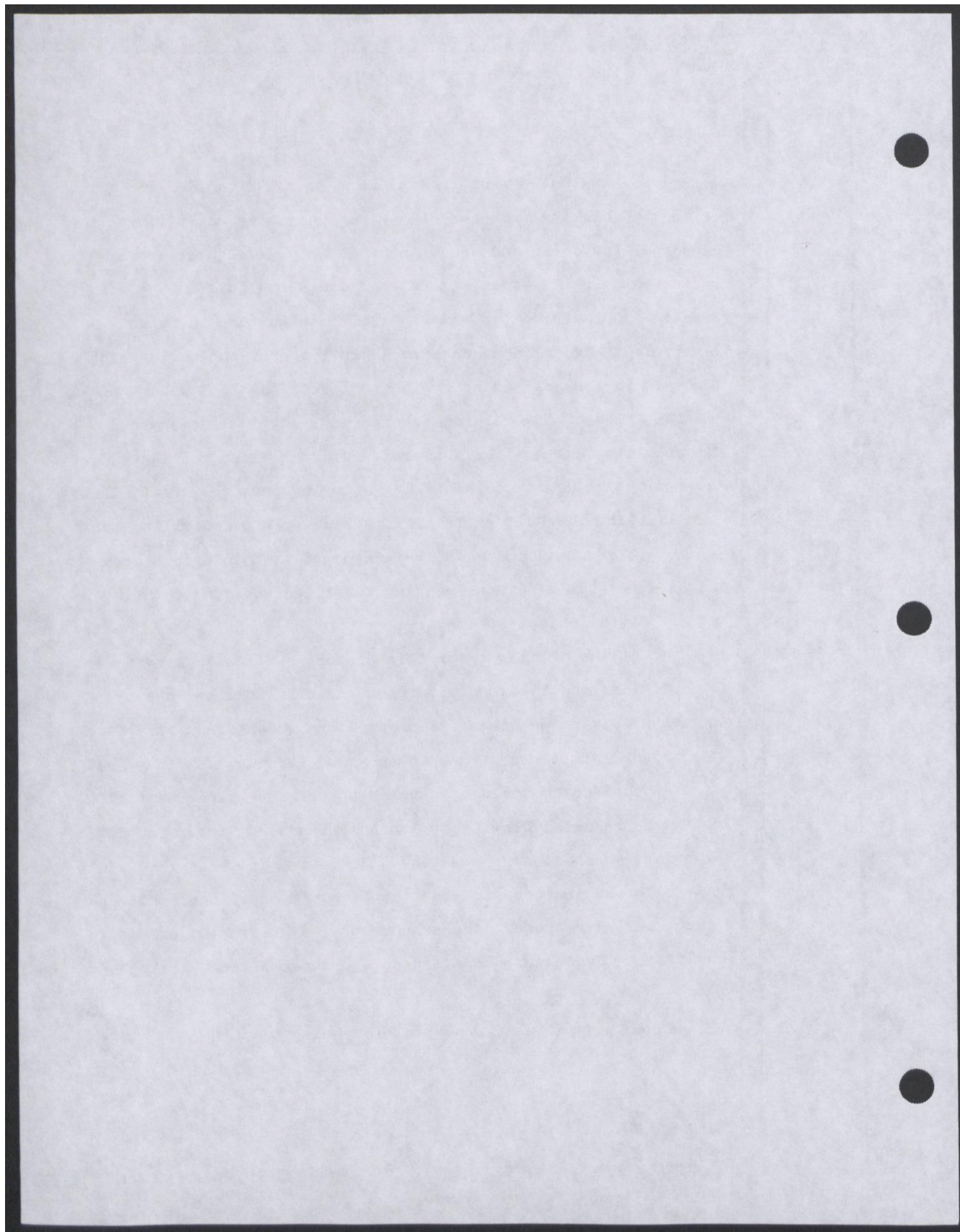
causal working out of rational plans. He substituted a morphology of history, the world-as-experience, evoked by images of compelling power and great inward beauty. Cultures are organisms, their life-span, extent and death implicit in the very problems of their youth. The soul of each Culture, a function of its depth experience, constructs an image of the world which binds it to the soil in which it grows, sets the limits for the possibilities of its natural-science and religion, determines the problems that must be answered. Gradually the tensions created by the dominance of waking-being becomes too great, the form is lost, the Culture transforms itself into a Civilization. Slowly, it stiffens and dies, returning to the biological ages that spawned it, its inner meaning fulfilled, no longer the master but the object of destiny.

Yet the brilliance of this picture and its in many ways psychological depth, cannot overcome the difficulties inherent in the underlying metaphysical assumptions which frequently fail to meet our twin tests of consistency and relevancy.<sup>1</sup> They fall short of the former because Spengler never makes clear what exactly he means by Destiny or the experience of Time. In the biological ages which precede the Culture and in the fellah state that follow waking-consciousness is at a minimum. Does this enduring mankind represent the essence of the Destiny-experience? The life of the Culture constitutes a process of actualizing

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1. See post Appendix A, Concepts of Meaning p.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 128  
**Image ID:** 15212917



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 129

Image ID: 15212918

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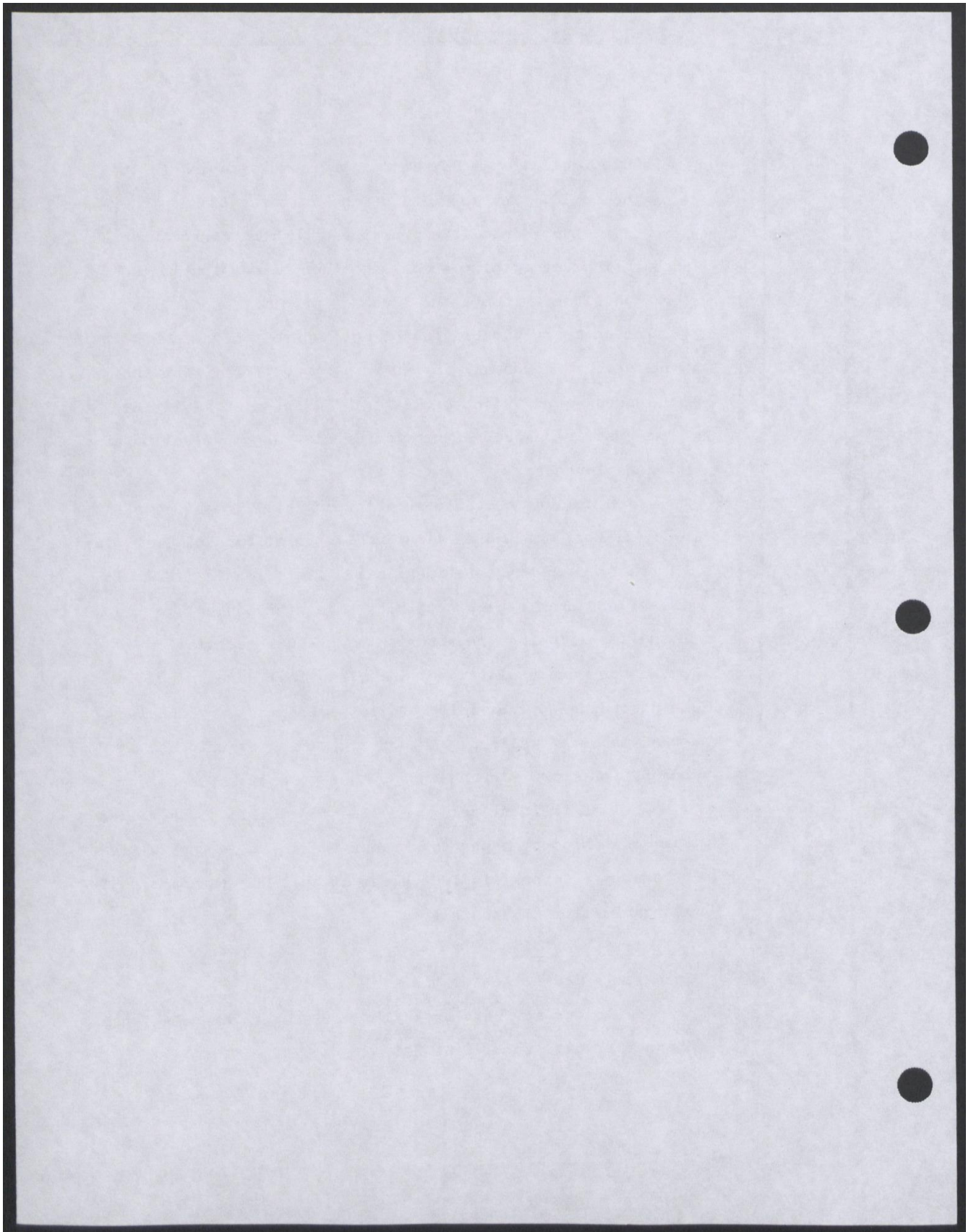
the possible,<sup>1</sup> all its manifestation profound symbols of its view of the world. Yet the soul of the culture, its depth experience, is given symbolic expression by making consciousness. It appears that everything which gives deeper meaning to the culture and lifts it above the level of primitive societies results from an aware purposiveness, not a purely organic destiny. "The Culture had bound all forces in a strict form. Now they were released - and Nature broke forth",<sup>2</sup> seems an admission that the creative aspect of growth reveals the construction of waking consciousness.

Each Culture not only goes through similar phases of youth, maturity, age and decline but its political and artistic embodiment at each stage is identical.<sup>3</sup> This too is difficult to accept. If each soul constitutes a counter-concept to the world and its life-span represents the gradual realization of its immanence, one would expect the historical development to differ according to the vision of its environment and the idea attempted to be actualized. Though everything organic has its periods of youth, growth and decay, these phenomena do not embody themselves in identical form. "Western History was willed and Classical history happened"<sup>4</sup> means nothing if we postulate the necessity of a political development that has the same political organization at each stage.<sup>5</sup>

1. Spengler's definition of the soul - Vol I. p. 54.
2. Spengler Vol II. op. cit. p. 418.
3. Or morphological as Spengler call functional inter-relationship.
4. Spengler op. cit. Vol I. p. 125.
5. Spengler op.cit. Vol II. p. 296.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 130

**Image ID:** 15212919



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As a matter of fact, Spengler is hard put to find uniformity, even between the Classical and Western Cultures, resulting in the definition of the Athenian poli as the Classical equivalent of dynastic feeling. But granting Spengler's thesis of identical political institutionalization two conclusions seem inescapable. To begin with, reality as an emanation of the Ego may not present totally different aspects to each culture, but contain a modicum of continuity of problemation. In this sense significance attaches not only to the newly adopted symbols, not only to the "Great renunciation" but also to the taking over of symbols and institutions and their recurrence at similar stages of development.

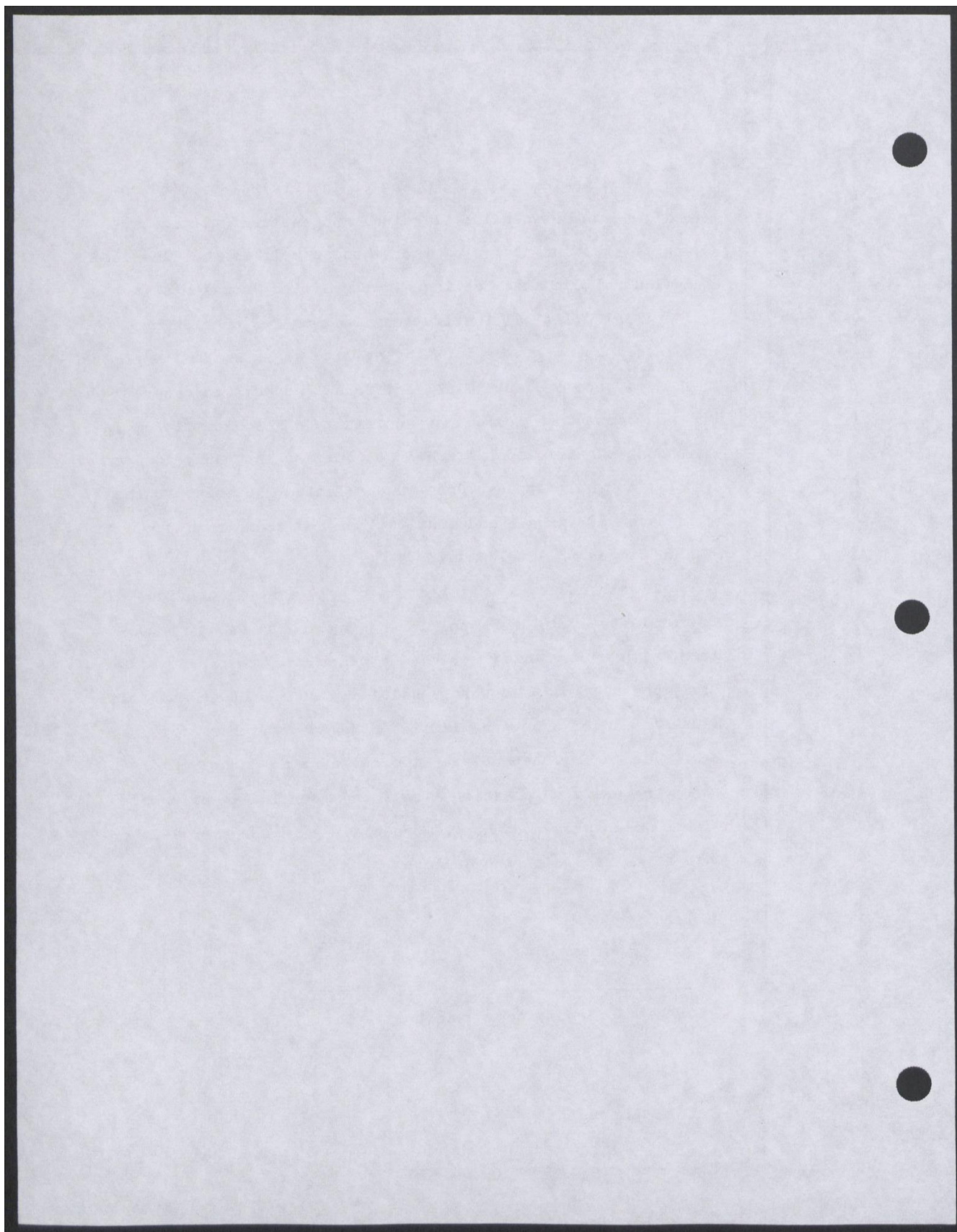
Furthermore, Spengler's empirical data<sup>1</sup> is confined almost exclusively to the Apollinian, Magian and Faustian cultures, with contemporary periods in other cultures frequently merely postulated. The very possibility of making an analysis of the "soul" of a culture implies a degree of inner correlation. The divergences between the cultures may merely hide an underlying unity, expressing itself in a continuity of problemation. These problems emerge more clearly in Spengler's elaboration of the souls of the Culture.

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1. On test of relevancy - see post - Ch. II The Concepts of Meaning.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 132

**Image ID:** 15212921



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 133

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The Souls of the Culture - The Appollinian Soul - Image.<sup>1</sup>

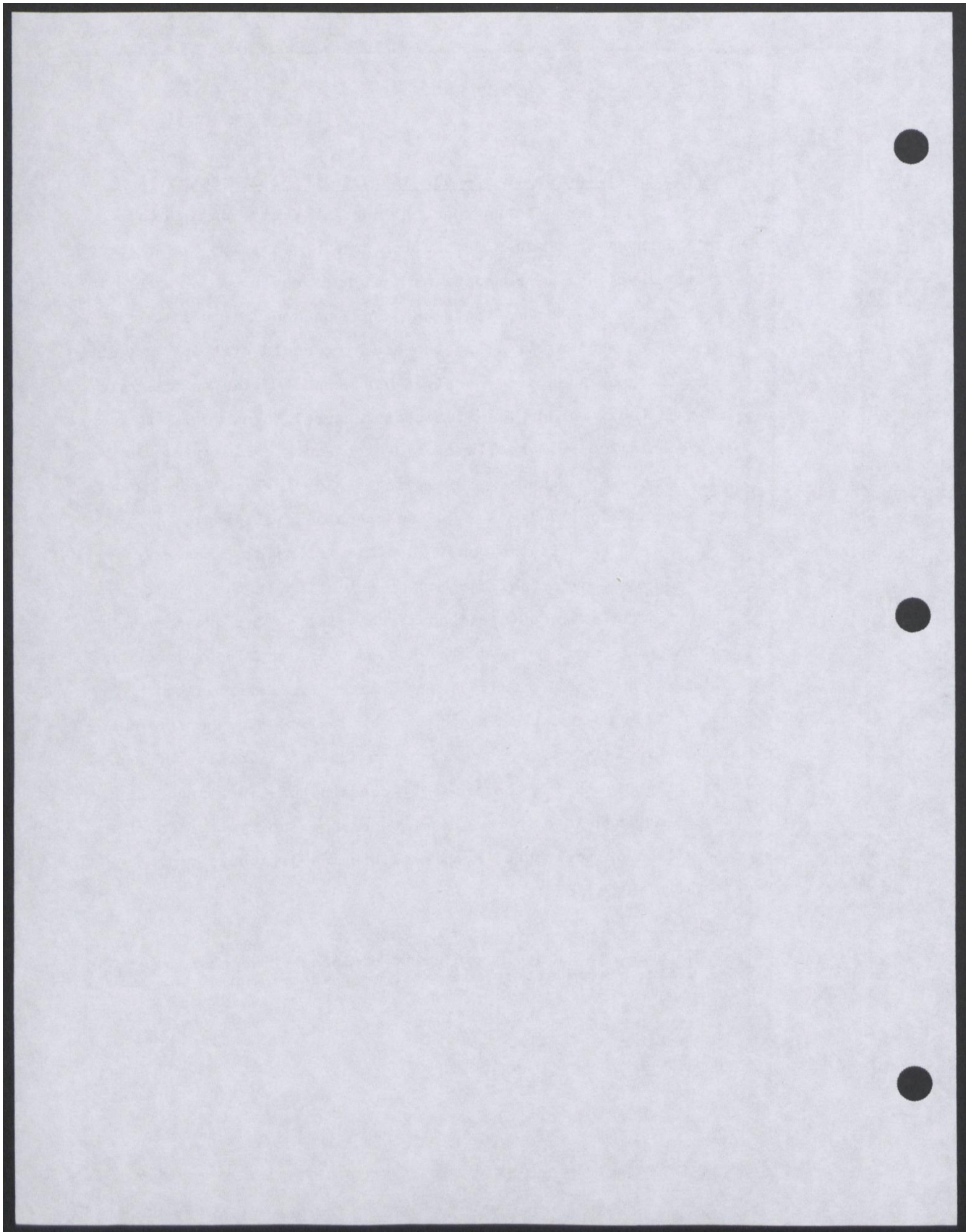
Spengler - in obvious reliance on Kant - calls his philosophy a Copernican revolution freeing the study of history from theoretical misconceptions that had prevented the full realization of its implications. Just as Copernicus liberated natural science by treating the earth as accidental instead of normative, so Spengler conceived his morphology as an analysis of functional rather than temporal interrelationships.<sup>2</sup> History represents the self-realization of the souls of Cultures their differences consequences of varying world-views. "Contemporary" means identical stages of an organic development.

Yet what is the soul? Spengler finds his answer in the belief of every philosopher or scientist in the existence of something subject to rational analysis.<sup>3</sup> "The question of whether the forms of thought are ever approachable by thought," which to the layman might appear dubious, is nevertheless held as an article of faith by every psychologist. The barrenness of technical psychology results from the impossibility of conceptually dissecting the inwardly certain, of importing definitional notions into the world of becoming. No system can offer analytical criterion for such realities as jealousy, regret or artistic intention.<sup>4</sup>

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1. In order to maintain the unity of Spengler's development, I have placed all my comments, post at the end of the section Magian soul.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 94.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 311.
  4. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 299.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 134

**Image ID:** 15212923



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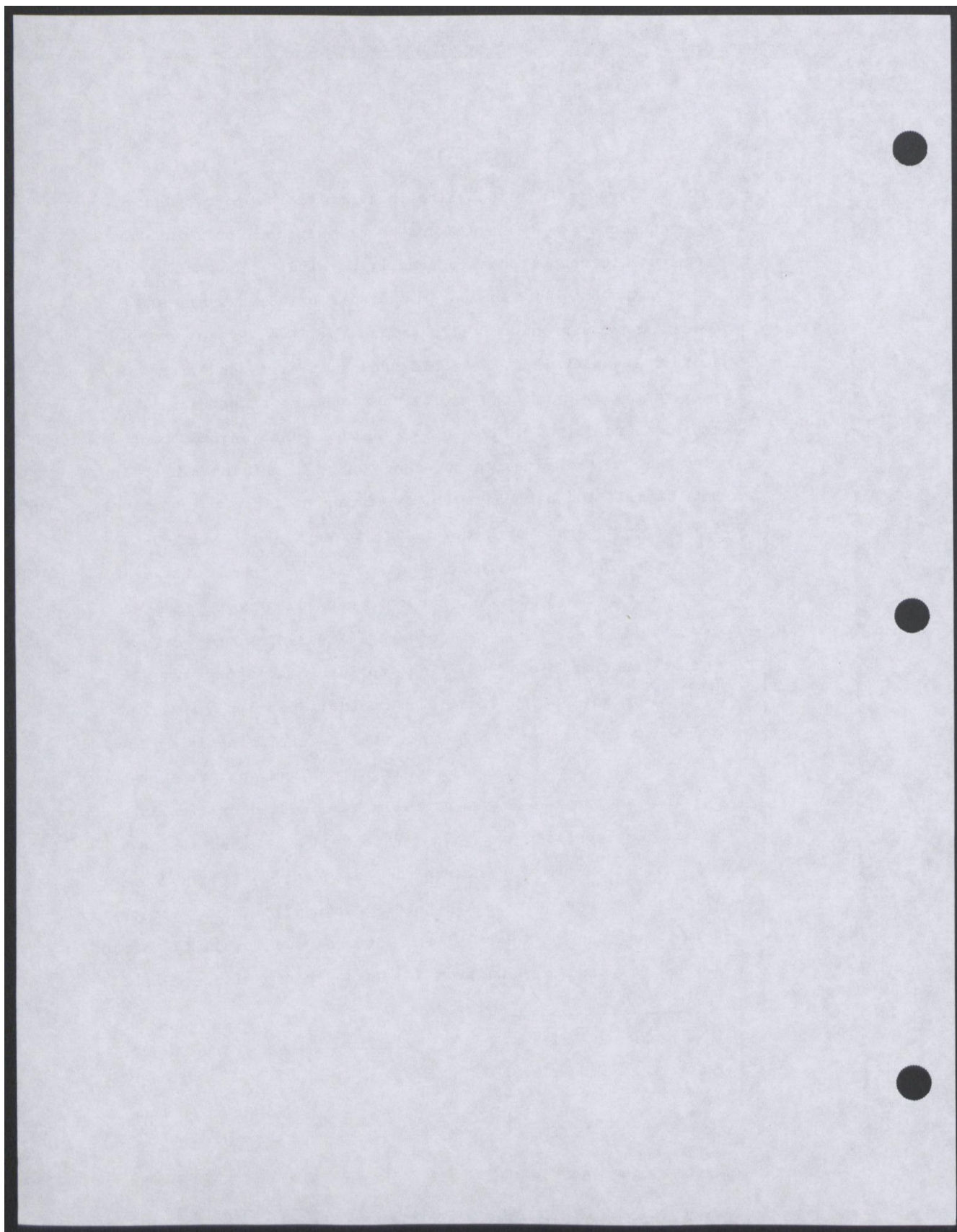
Spengler's metaphysical antinomies reappear. Causality can serve for the apprehension of phenomena only insofar as nature is conceived as eternally possible. The soul, however, not a phenomena, but an image derived from the primary and continuing experience of life and death. Every free moving being must understand the world around it as a condition for survival. The knowledge of the macrocosm as a technical and empirical mastery is the World-as-Nature. But beyond the environment, man divines the presence of a "something other" in both himself and others, which by virtue of its physiognomically impressive powers evokes the desire to know and is anxiously pondered. Thus the notion of the soul arises, as an image of everything in man which can never be causally known, as a counterworld to nature, as a mode of visualizing what will always be inaccessible by the light-world of the eye.

The soul's representation reflects Spengler's metaphysical scheme. Its image is a myth pondered religiously by the spirituality that still sees God in nature and analyzed conceptually as soon as Nature comes to be observed critically. Just as Time constitutes a counter-concept to Space, so the notion of a soul is the inverse of the picture of the world. "Every psychology becomes a counter-physics."<sup>1</sup> This prevents an exact science of the soul, of universal applicability, since such an analysis is a function of the depth experience of its

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1. Spengler op. cit. - Vol. I. p. 301.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 136  
**Image ID:** 15212925



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culture. The Apollinian constructed its inner world as a group of excellent parts. The Western thinker conceives his image as forces of thinking, feeling, willing. The Magian psychologist views his soul as an airy substance (nepesh, ruach) in conjunction with a bodily substance, both deriving reality only from an infusion of the divine pneuma.

Spengler defines the image of the soul as the possible<sup>1</sup> and the World as the actual. Thus life is the process of actualizing the possible, the history of each culture constituting a ripening and deepening of its soul-picture. This accounts for the profound symbolism of all manifestations of activity of Cultures, and the complete lack of inner meaning of every creation of both the primitive and fellah state.

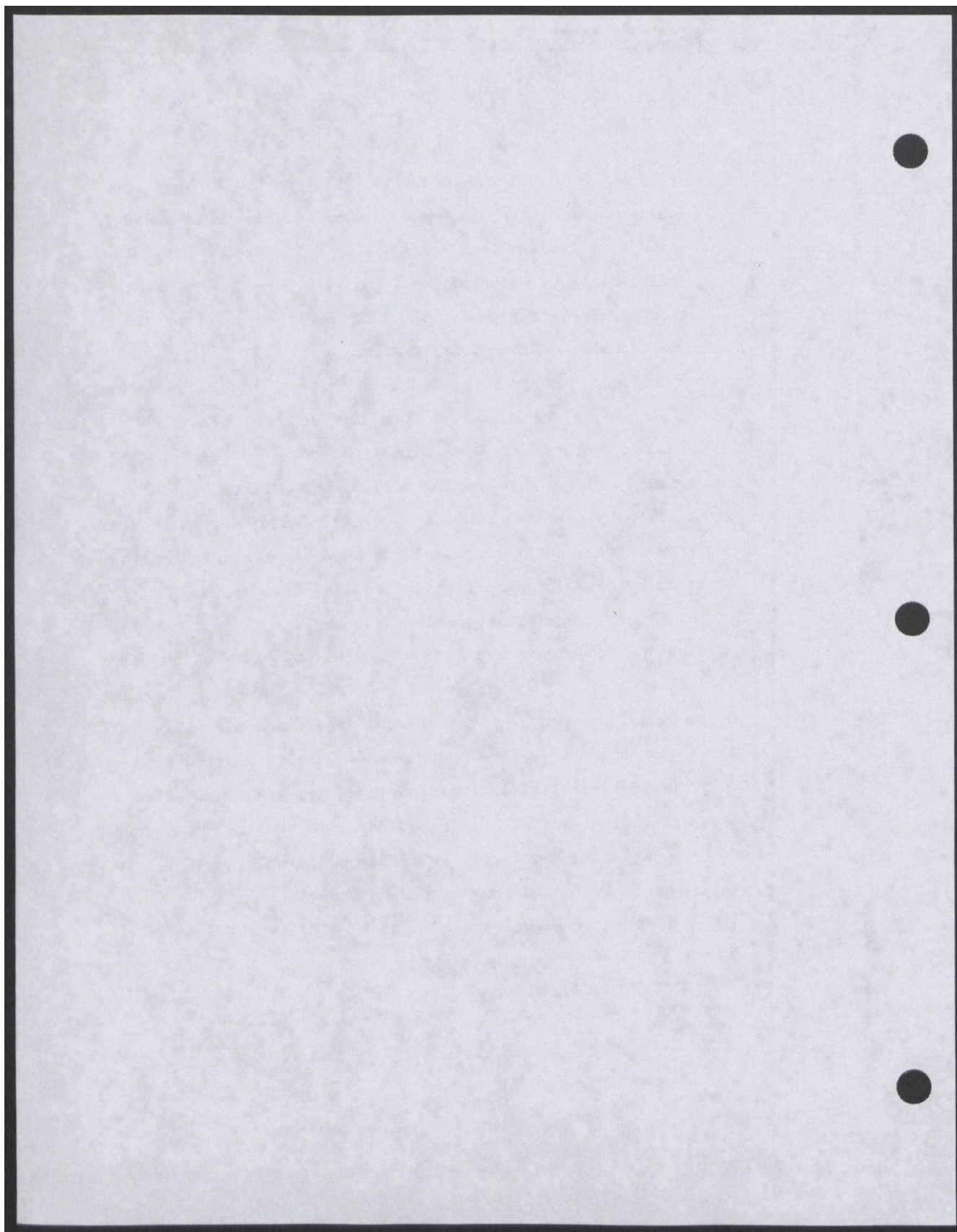
Since the waking-consciousness arrives at self-knowledge through the experience and fear of death, the rites of burial, the disposal of the bodies serve as profound indications of the depth-experience of the different cultures. Because all art is an expression of world-longing and all natural science an analysis of the religious world-picture, the grand symbolism of the culture includes all their manifestations, with the proviso that the maturity and decline will see a diminution of the cosmic beat, its emanations ever more uncertain and inconclusive until the inevitable approach of the fellah state at the

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1. Spengler op. cit. - Vol. I. p. 54.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 138

**Image ID:** 15212927



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end of the Civilization.

The Classical or Appollinian soul conceived of existence as exhausting itself in a pure present against the background of the Golden Age. Its passionate denial of infinity came to expression at its inception in the great refusal to take over the form-world and architectural style of the Minoan world. Suddenly, about 1100 B.C., with the emergence of the Mycenaean culture great architecture ceased. The barrow for the burial of the dead - is supplanted by the burning of the corpses. Wood replaces stone as building-material despite an abundance of quarries in Hellas. Existence consists of a denial of infinity, an emphasis on pure being. Thucydides states in his "History of the Peloponnesian War" that before the year 400, his time, not much of importance had happened in Greece.

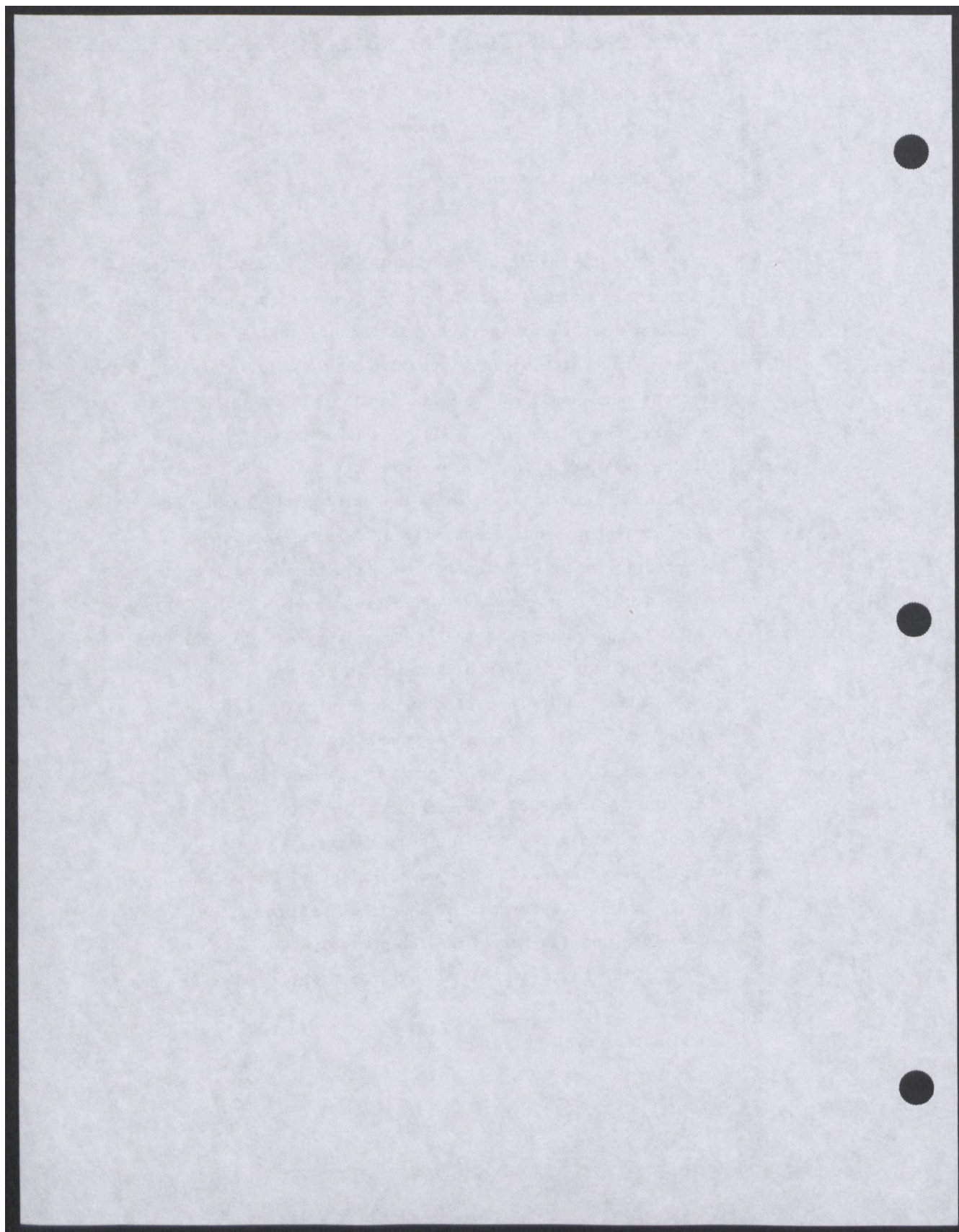
Life, in the Appollinian world constituted a spiritual static. The Greek word for personality is persona<sup>1</sup> which does not express the concept of character but describes the public mien, the "gesture" of its carrier. The ideal of the Classical was Cosmos, the perfectly defined, absolute Ent, in opposition to which space was felt, not as a challenge, but as Non-Ent, Chaos, the not-yet-formed. The self asserting Ego of the Western culture, or its forceful, all-pervasive God would have been equally alien to the Appollinian world-feeling. Man as a body

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 316.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 140

**Image ID:** 15212929



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 141

Image ID: 15212930

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achieves reality through his relation to other bodies, with the Gods as the upper limit and the slave as the lower. This explains Aristotle's statement that only a fool of a God could live alone and makes the idea of an Athenian Robinson Crusoe<sup>1</sup> unthinkable. The Gods were merely perfectly formed bodies of more than average powers, though equally subject with other bodies to the blind working of Tyche. Zeus in the Iliad holds up the scale, not to determine, but to learn Hector's fate.

The Platonic conception of the soul, as a sum of excellent parts, with Reason in the Olympian commanding position, emerges as the classical image just as its yearning for concreteness constructed a scientific theory of static mechanics. The problem of the relation between the knower and the known Plato resolved as a matter-of-course into a passage of knowledge to the recipient. His captives in the cave were really captives, objects of the light from the common sun, not - as in Kant egos - imposing their forms on the world, not suns themselves<sup>2</sup> irradiating the universe.

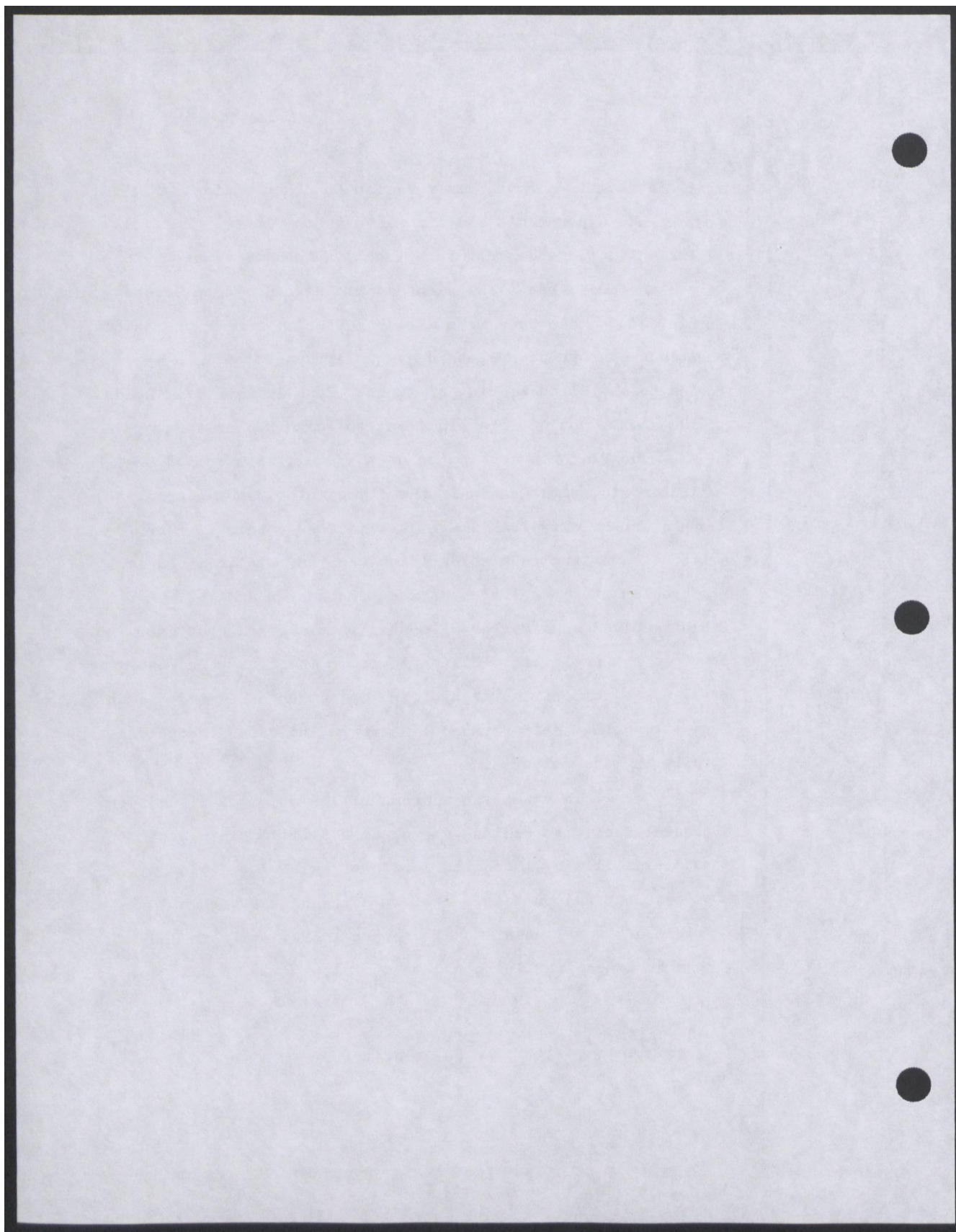
The Attic drama was a drama of the moment. Its heroes represent Euclidian bodies, struck in a position they did not choose, assailed by the blind forces of Fate, the jealousy of the Gods, the sudden total negation of being, as the most terrible of experiences. What happens to Hamlet is the consequence of a meaningful inner development, but Oedipus is the

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 316.  
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 311.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 142

**Image ID:** 15212931



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 143

Image ID: 15212932

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victim of circumstances that could happen to anyone. The Grand Gesture, which defines a being to other bodies, represents the only possible course of action of the soma that is being gratuitously destroyed. Spiritual characterization was prevented by the wearing of masks and the padding of figures<sup>1</sup> made movement almost impossible.

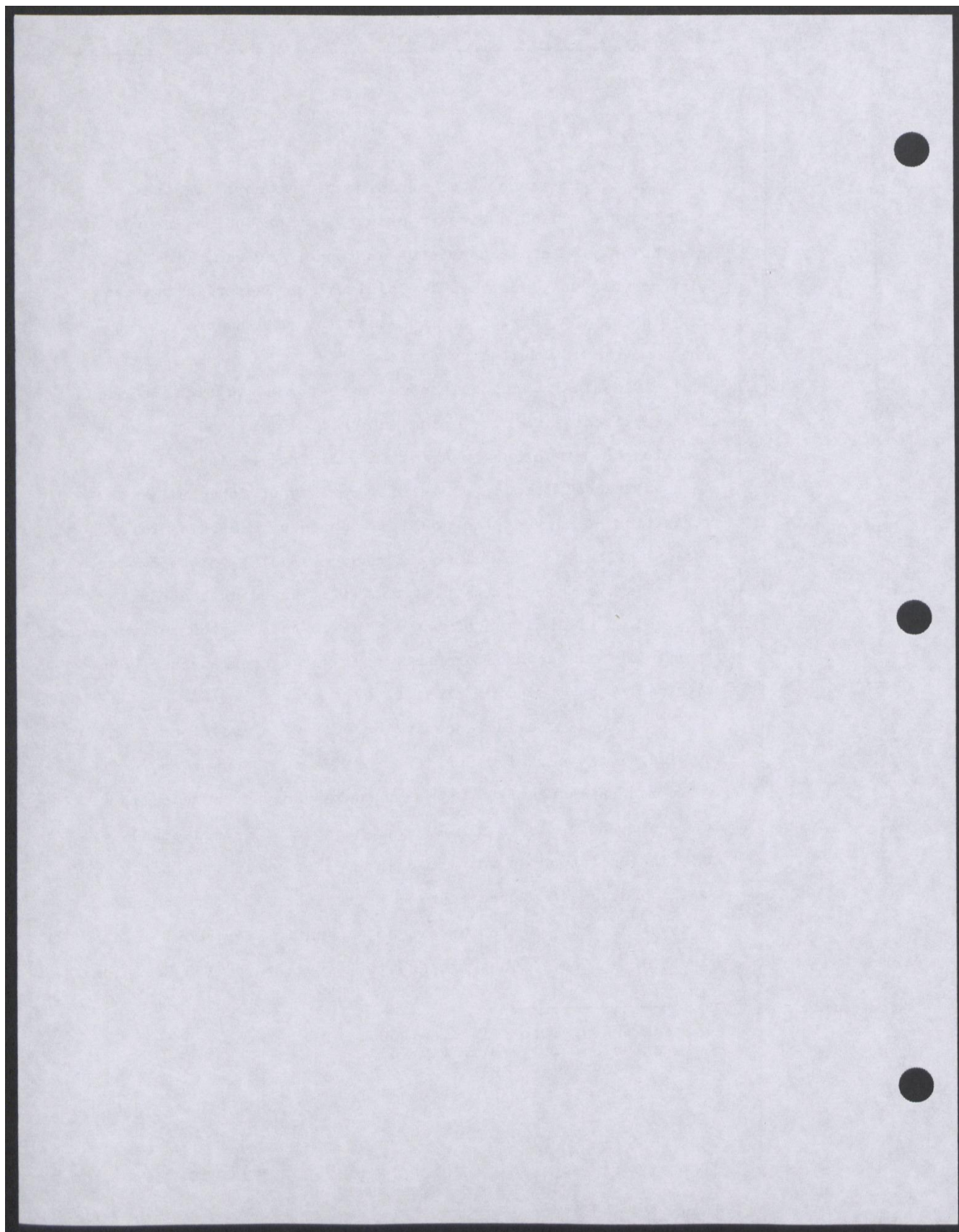
Classical architecture was ever forced to fight against the assertiveness of pure being, which it threatened by the implication of permanence inherent in building. This gave rise to the Classical temple, of extreme poverty of form, since the recognition of many styles would have been an admission of a type of infinity. Its columns of uneven spacing, its accentuation of beam and load, its flat roof all served as a denial of space and an affirmation of the exclusive validity of the present. Appollinian art became a production of great feebleness of characterization, but also of timeless evenness.<sup>2</sup>

Since Natural Science is the outward expression of the soul-image, the causal description of the religious view, a static mechanics resulted. The human tendency to reduce its nature-picture to the minimal forms capable of intellectual manipulation issued in an atomic theory, of small, perfectly elastic bodies, of unpredictable motion operating through shock and countershock. Motion became not a spatial force but an attribute of bodies.<sup>3</sup> Thus the greatest creation of the Classical

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 325.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 316.
3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 385.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 144

**Image ID:** 15212933



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 145

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scientific mind was Euclidian geometry, the measurement and circumscription of concrete representations.

This, too, applied to Classical political life. The feudal kingdoms of the Homeric period ever contracted their horizon until the polis were reached, a pure point of being, where the Greek, a body among other bodies, could view his world from the Acropolis. This conception of a political organization as a self-contained city-state, which made everything beyond the horizon strange and potentially hostile led to the struggle to sheer extinction which ever characterized the politics of Hellas. The only issue of these campaigns could be the razing of the city and the extermination or enslavement of the hostile populations. The ideal of each polis was autarkia, complete economic independence, a minimum of intercourse with other city-states, a state of blissful present being, the utopia of Plato, Aristotle and all Greek statesmen. The anti-historical instinct expressed itself in the complete spoilage of natural resources. The prudent, long-term policy of Western cultures were completely unknown. Surpluses when achieved was distributed among the population.<sup>1</sup>

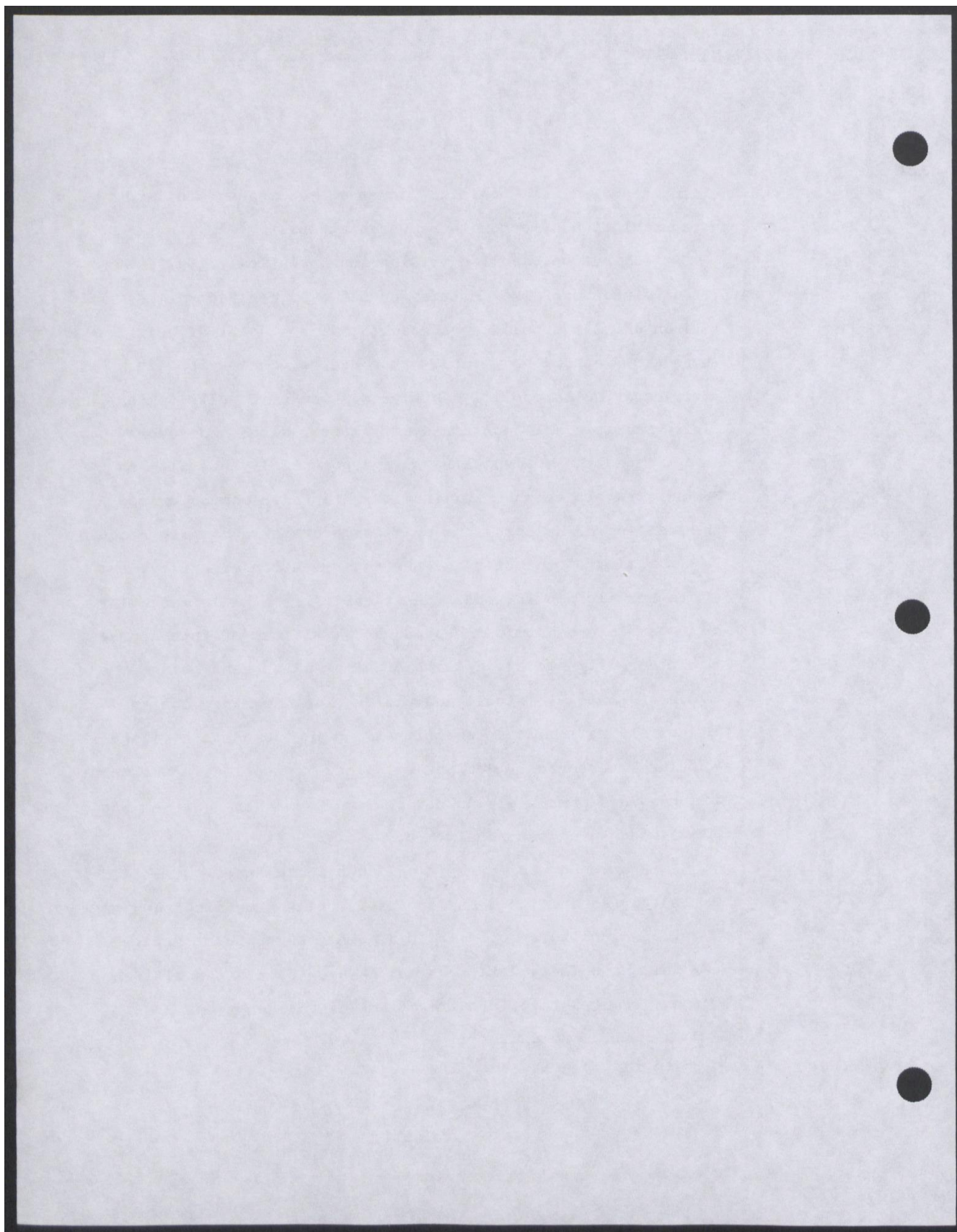
Even Rome was merely a poli become immense. It dotted the Mediterranean with dependencies in poli-form, its focus of attention ever the embodiment in a point, of regional existence. Thus Rome knew Alexandria, but not Egypt. Even after citizenship was granted to all Italians, the center and meaning of

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 407.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 146

**Image ID:** 15212935



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 147

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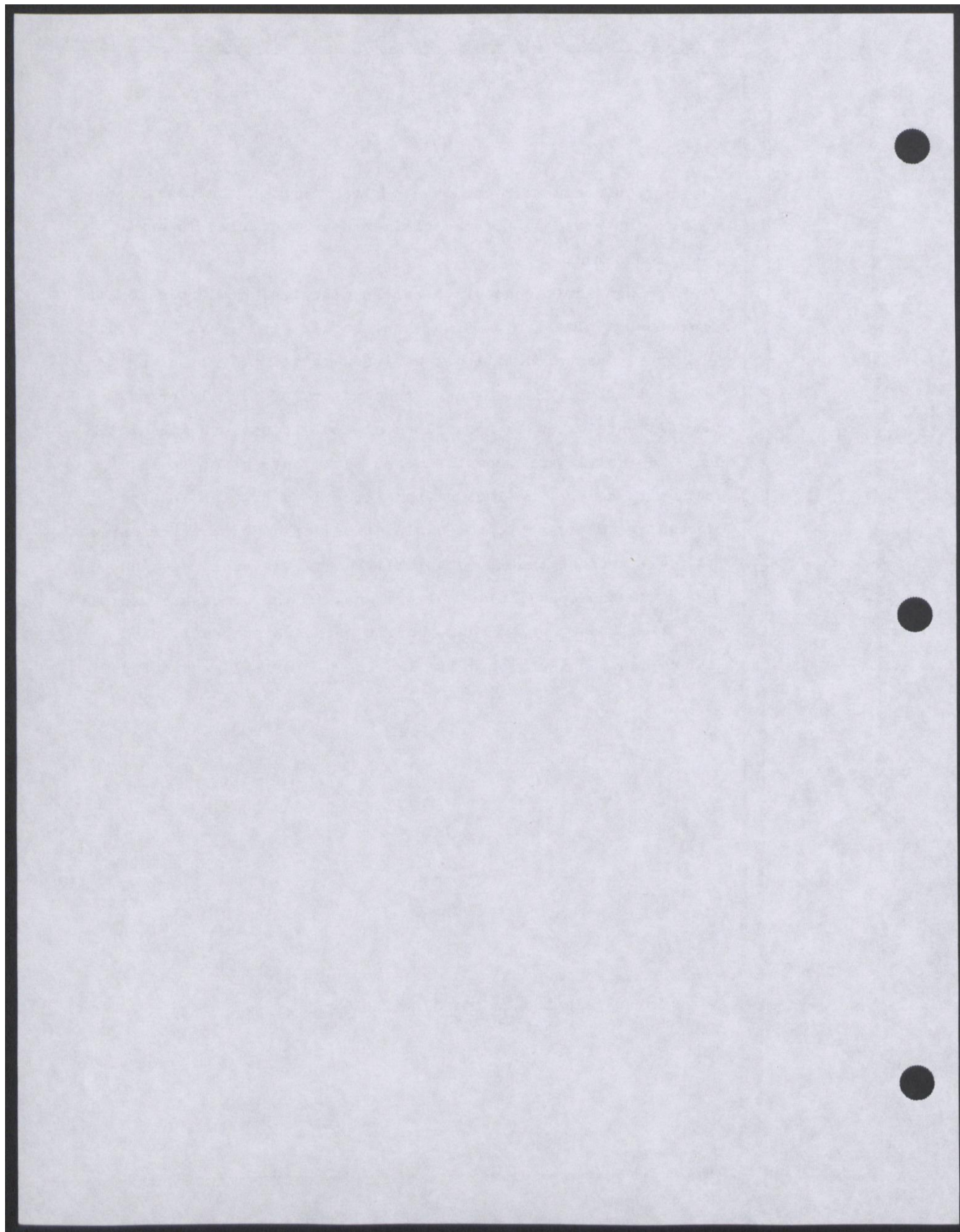
events remained Rome. The idea of transferring the vote from Rome to the residence of the citizen never occurred to any Roman statesman.

Spengler's conception of the classical soul reveals its essence as a negation of Time, just as its history was episodic, of a great mass of detail but no inner relation.<sup>1</sup> It clung to the coast of the Mediterranean in clusters of tightly organized city-states, with no serious attempt to explore the hinterland. To settle far from the coast would have meant to lose touch with home. The immigration into the U.S., the lonely pioneering in the West, the explorations of a Columbus or Marco Polo, all were beyond the possibilities of Classical Mankind.<sup>2</sup>

So the Appollinian culture grew in the process of actualizing its life-symbol of pure bodily presence and so it died without knowing it through its lack of historical perspective.

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1. No inner relation to the Classical Mind.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 336.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 148  
**Image ID:** 15212937



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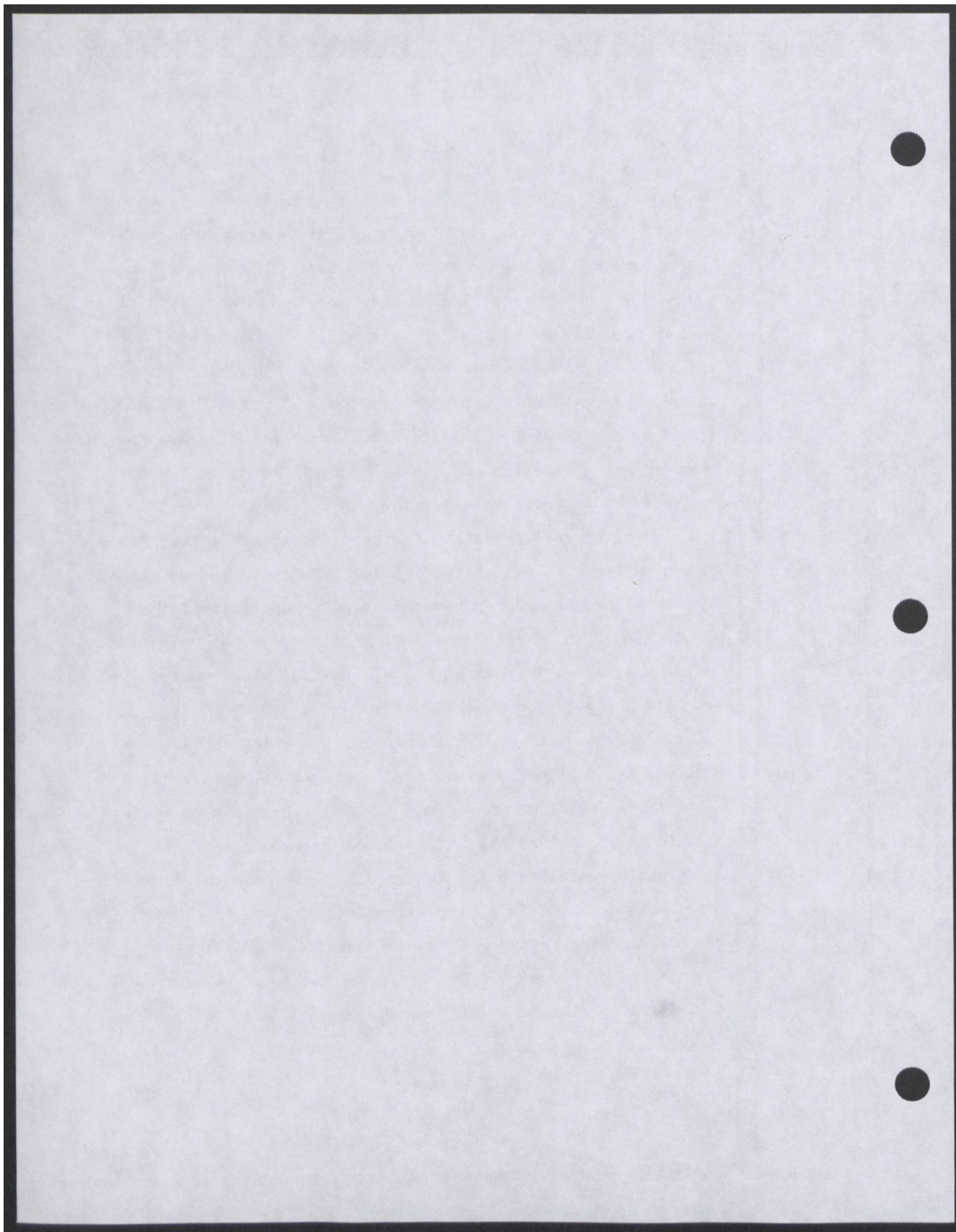
Faustian Soul

Spengler dates the history of the Western culture from the years 900-1000. At that time, the fear of the end of the world, the confused yearning of the Merovingian and Carolingian period, the dark groping of the migrations suddenly coalesced and the Western soul appeared, its essence a striving into the infinite, a passionate drive to overcome all limit, to lose itself in the quest for the eternal. Its representative for Spengler is the Faustian man, an integer of force, will and action-at-a-distance, a lonely ego in an endless void, feeling time as an expression of directedness, projecting his determination into all his activities. In almost every respect this emerging culture represents the polar opposite of the Apollinian. The Greek Gods dwell on Olympus, "but Valhalla is nowhere, a mystic resting place, with its disharmonious Gods and heroes the very symbol of solitude."<sup>1</sup>

The Faustian Culture, too, made its great refusal. It, too, was faced with the symbols of a Civilization inwardly disconnected and ever remote. Though, the West took over the Magian religion of Christianity, it remodeled these concepts to fit the dynamic yearning in its soul and replaced the theology of the substantiality of God and His modes, by its passionate assertion of the Father-God, Force itself, constant activity, not capable of embodiment in a shape comprehensible by the human mind.<sup>2</sup> Yet the whole longing of the young soul, its feeling of

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1. Spengler - op. cit. Vol I. p. 186.
  2. Spengler - op. cit. Vol II. p. 288.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 150  
**Image ID:** 15212939



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 151

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Care, the determination to prevail extending in time both into the past and into the future over many generations, coalesced in its specific creation, the Mother Mary. Her crowning in Heaven was one of the earliest motifs of Faustian art. She became the light-figure in blue, the smiling dispenser of Grace, finally culminating in the festival among the English Benedictines of the Immaculate Conception, which completed Her disembodiment.

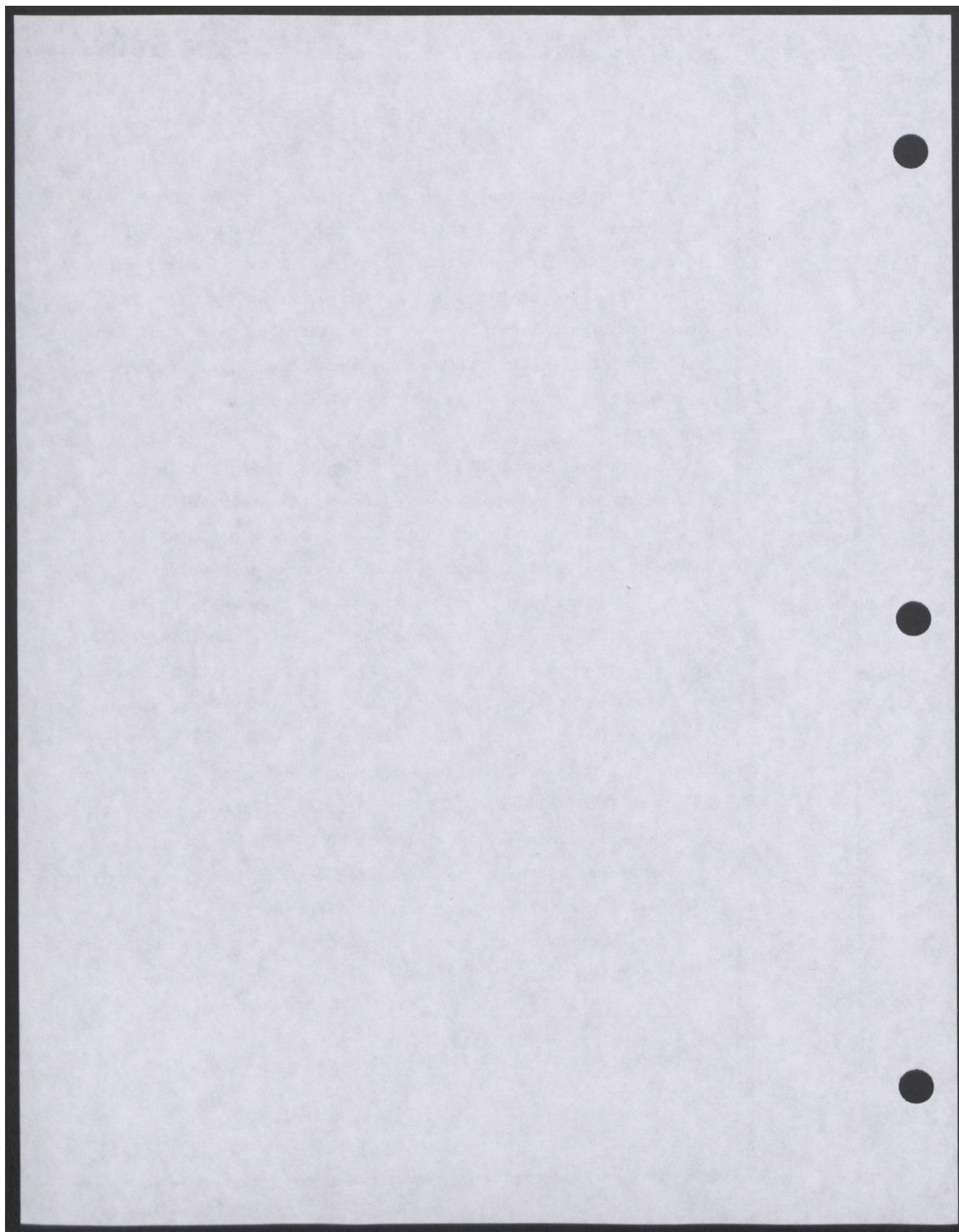
Yet this world of purity, bliss and happiness involved at the same time the counter-creation of the early Gothic - the realm of the Devil, who throughout Mary's world of infinite understanding, was lurking in the background ever ready, to tempt, to lead astray, to destroy the soul. Only the late condition of his culture prevents Western Man - according to Spengler - from understanding the terrible fear that then hung over humanity, of stumbling into the abyss. There were witches sabbaths and black magic, night feast on mountain-tops and charm-formula.<sup>1</sup> A pitiless, constant war had to be waged against the prince from Hell and his fallen angels. "Wretches confessed to witchcraft, sincerely imagining it to be true and inquisitors with tears in their eyes sentenced them to the Pyre, for it was Hell, not death, that humanity feared."<sup>2</sup>

This explains the sense of guilt that permeates all Gothic longing. The cathedrals rose ever more pleadingly towards heaven,

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 279.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 293.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 152

**Image ID:** 15212941



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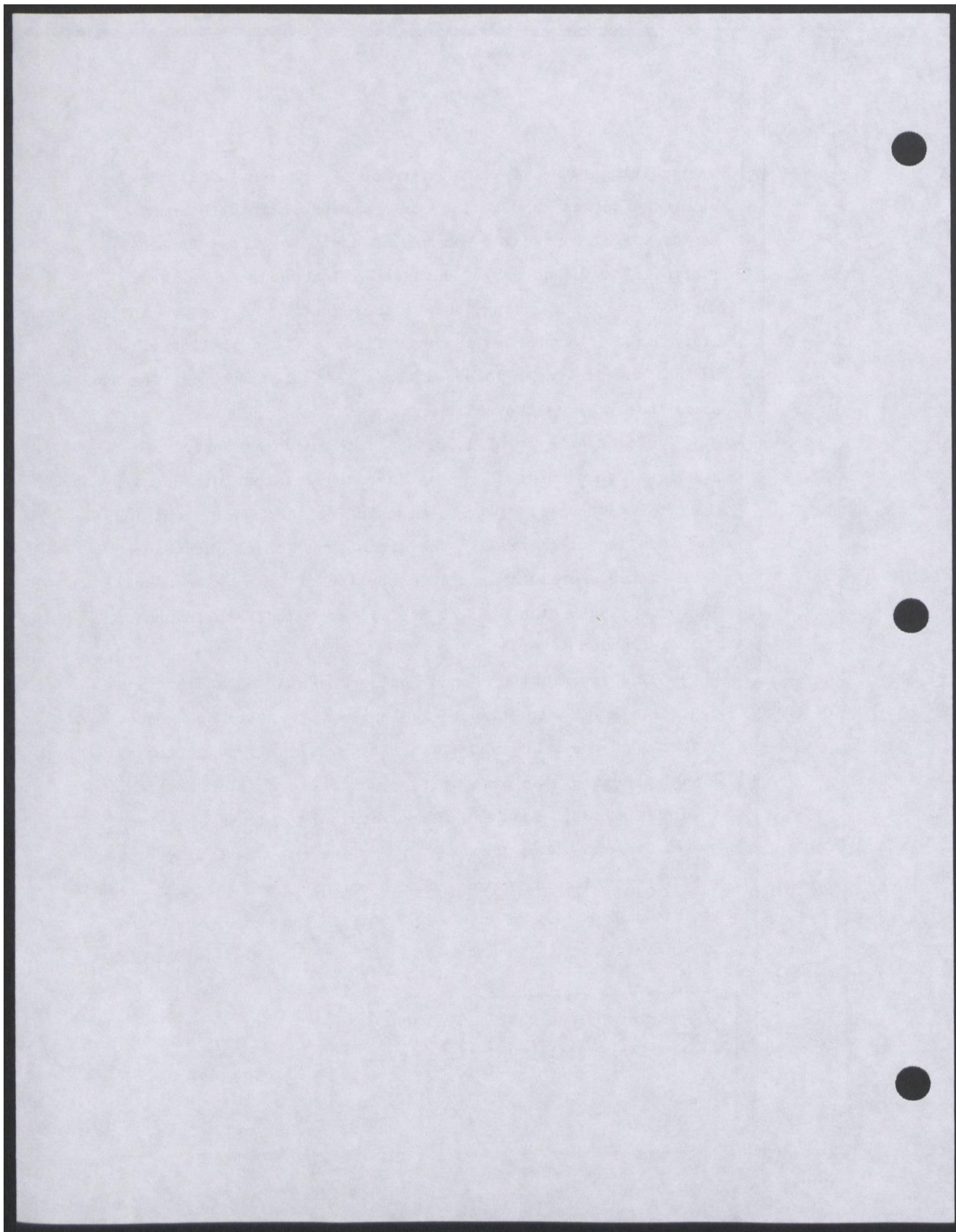
the vaulting turned into hands folded in prayer and little help came to man through the stained windows into the semi-darkness of the naves.<sup>1</sup> Man was a lonely Ego, lost in the infinite, with the powers of darkness-all-around. "For Magian man heaven was impending, but to the Faustian heaven was infinitely far." There arose the ever finer differentiation of notions the desire to lose selfness, the universal, cry for the Grace that unbinds the will.<sup>2</sup>

To be able to will freely is the highest desire of . . . Faustian transcendence. The sacraments elevated into dogma by the Lateran Council of 1215, mean in their deepest significance the unbinding of the will. The transformation of the meaning of the altar sacrament into an assertion of free being results - the conception of the one who sacrificed himself to insure for his own freedom to will.<sup>3</sup>

The sacrament of Contrition represents the noblest manifestation of the Faustian world-longing. Baptism one receives by virtue of one's humanity, contrition is the recognition of the uniqueness of the personality, which alone determines the value of the act. Each man can search only his own conscience. The release and bliss given by this sacrament constitutes one of the profoundest creations of all religious effort, a release from the dark clouds of unresolved doubts that ever remain in the big crisis of life. The insecurity resulting from the decline

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol I. p. 290.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 292.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 293.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 154  
**Image ID:** 15212943



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 155

Image ID: 15212944

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of this sacrament caused the Mary world of light to fade out.  
Only the world of the devil remained.<sup>1</sup> "The concept of the  
priesthood of all believers, is one to which a few strong souls  
can win through, but only as the part of priesthood that in-  
volves duties not powers, for no man ever confesses to himself  
with the inward certainty of absolution."<sup>2</sup> So the Faustian  
yearning for release from its longing, for an expression of  
its conviction that "tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner", to  
overcome the inner warfare within its soul, calls on its con-  
temporaries instead of the infinite as judges and priests. Thus  
is born the auto-biographical art of Rembrandt's self-portraits,  
of Bach's and above all Beethoven's music, each a confession  
of a tortured soul seeking release. But in this tension, too,  
the concern with the Ego causes a loss of the felt unity of the  
universe, a symptom of the beginning of the "Late" stage of the  
Culture.

Thus arises the Faustian feeling that evaluates the act  
with reference to the doer not the deed, the psychology that  
sees forces of willing, feeling, thinking striving for domin-  
ance in a dynamic cosmology.

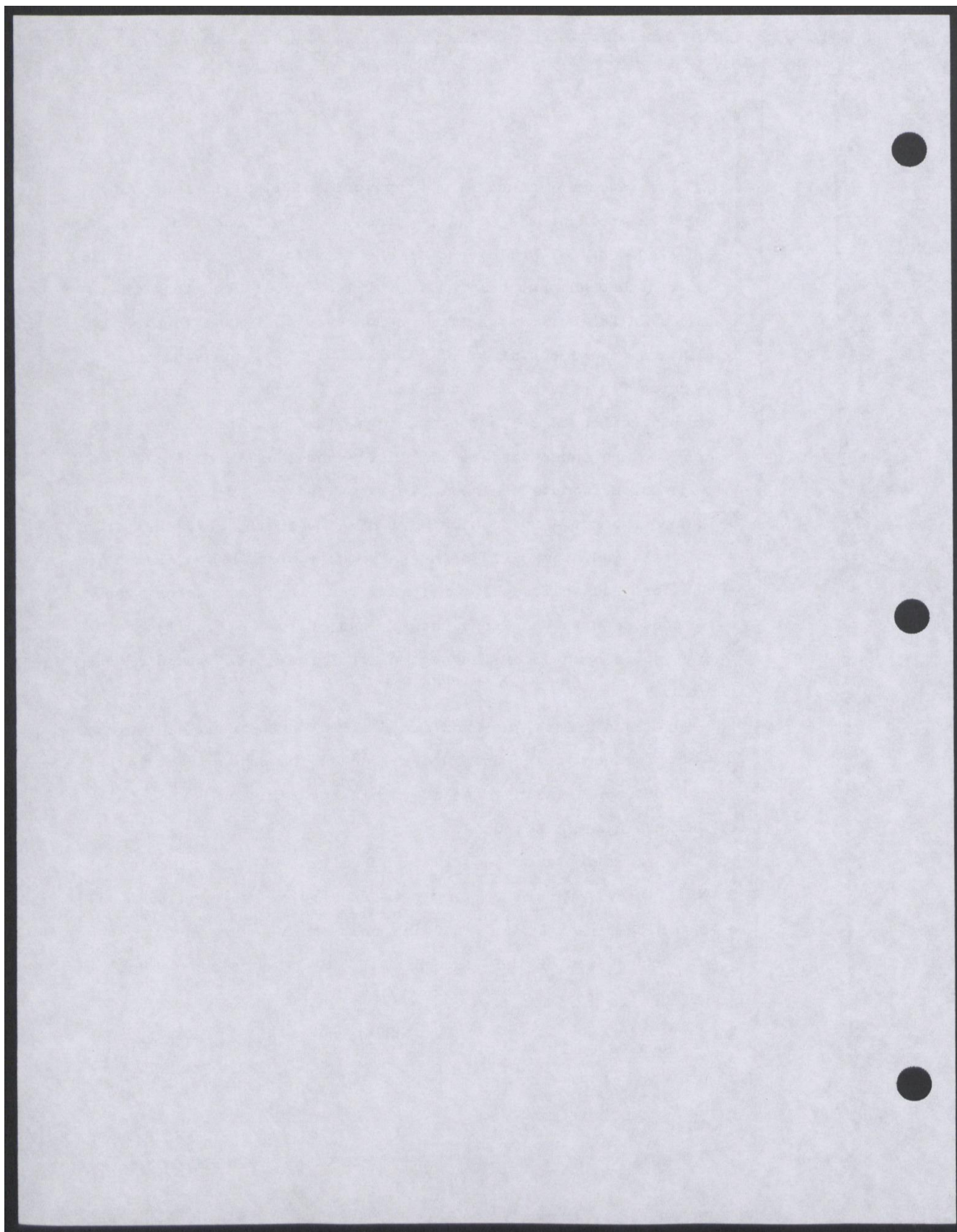
Faustian art, too, is an embodiment of this yearning  
for infinity. Though its early manifestation was architectural,  
stone with its affirmation of the body could never serve as the  
final expression of the Western soul. Michelangelo passionately

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 294.  
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 295.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 156

**Image ID:** 15212945



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 157

Image ID: 15212946

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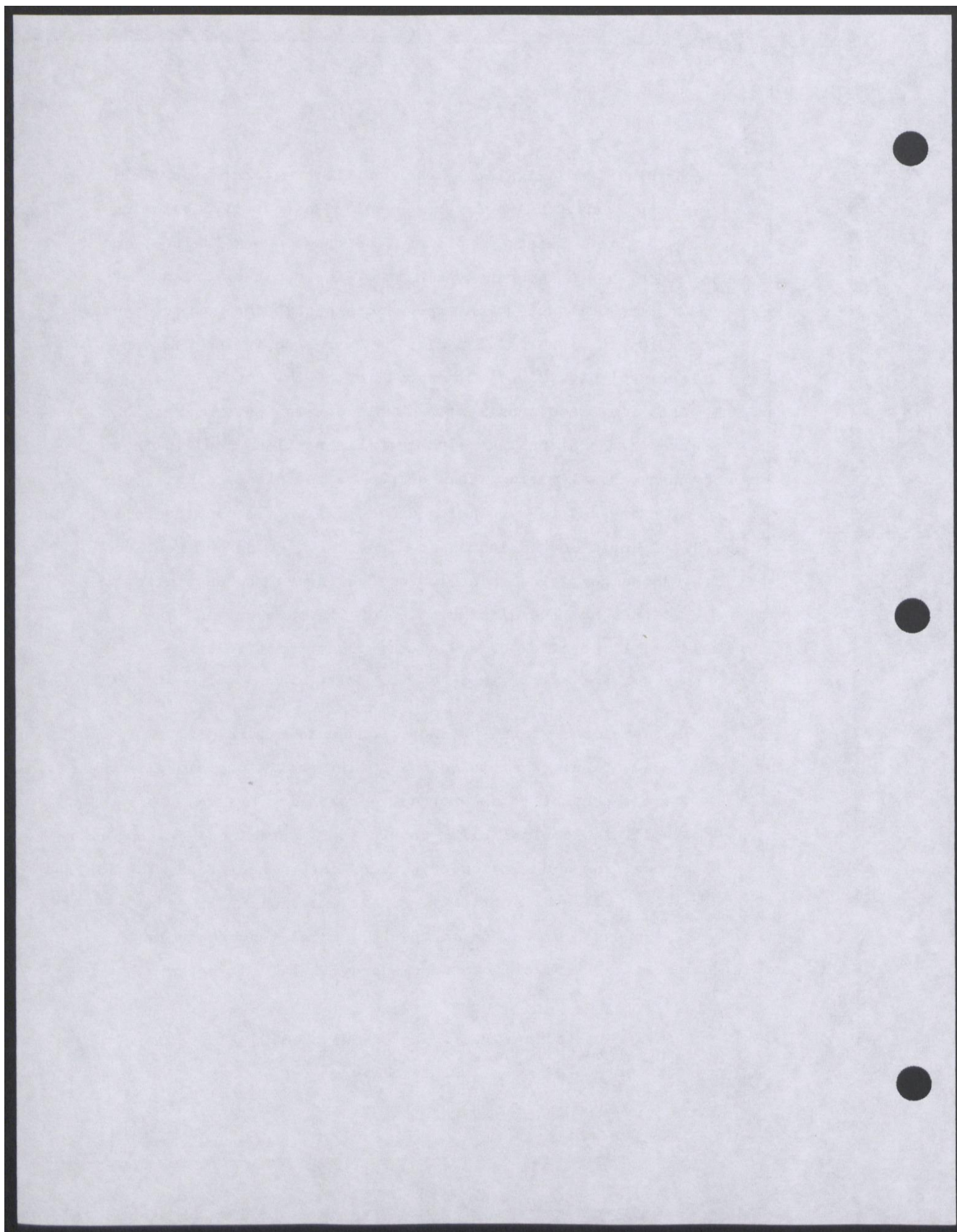
fought with its limitations, each of his creations a battle frozen in stone. But only the advent of perspective painting began to give release. One stands before a Greek fresco, but one sinks into a Rembrandt painting. The depth-experience of the Western culture, which experiences everything as mere centers of gravity in a spatial dynamics is expressed in the Western perspective which directs the position of the spectator and pulls him into its space treatment.<sup>1</sup> But the true Western art, that represents the eternal straining of its restless soul is that of contrapuntal music. This completes the disembodiment of space, expressed the upsoaring drive, filled the cathedrals in Bach and burst beyond into space in Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. But with Wagner, size is no longer the inward representation of greatness but the dissimulation of its absence<sup>2</sup> and just as Pergamos, it heralds the end of the great tradition.

Faustian natural-science represents a mere mirror of these tendencies. What is felt as God in religious experience, becomes the concept of all-pervasive Force in physics. Where the Appollinian world-feeling consists of a passionate assertion of the bodiliness of its objects, the Western soul tends towards a denial of all substantiality. Space itself is felt as a force, expressed by Newton as gravity and stated by atomic physics in the form of quanta of energy.<sup>3</sup> Natural science

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 241 and p. 330.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 291.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 385.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 158

**Image ID:** 15212947



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 159

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becomes ever more esoteric and abstract, dissolving in its hypothesis all sense-experience of phenomenal reality. The infinite space of the universe postulated by astronomy, the endless geological periods are not empirical observations, but a resolve of the soul, that considers the recognition of limits a denial of its existence. It is the spirit that motivated the invention of gun-powder - action-a-distance and discovered independently by the Chinese, whose destiny idea is comparable to the Western, at a contemporary stage of development.

This is the mentality that produces dynasties as the objects of reverence, the embodiment of its feeling of Care, in the political world.<sup>1</sup> Cabinet diplomacy, the determination to master space, the travels of Spanish and Portuguese explorers, the pioneers of the American West, the drive for records of any sort all are emanations of the Faustian will-to-infinity. The immense practicability of the West, that views the whole world as a working hypothesis, and its great symbol the machine as a perpetuum mobile represents the assertion of Mastery over nature which appears in metaphysical shape in the Kantian forms a priori.

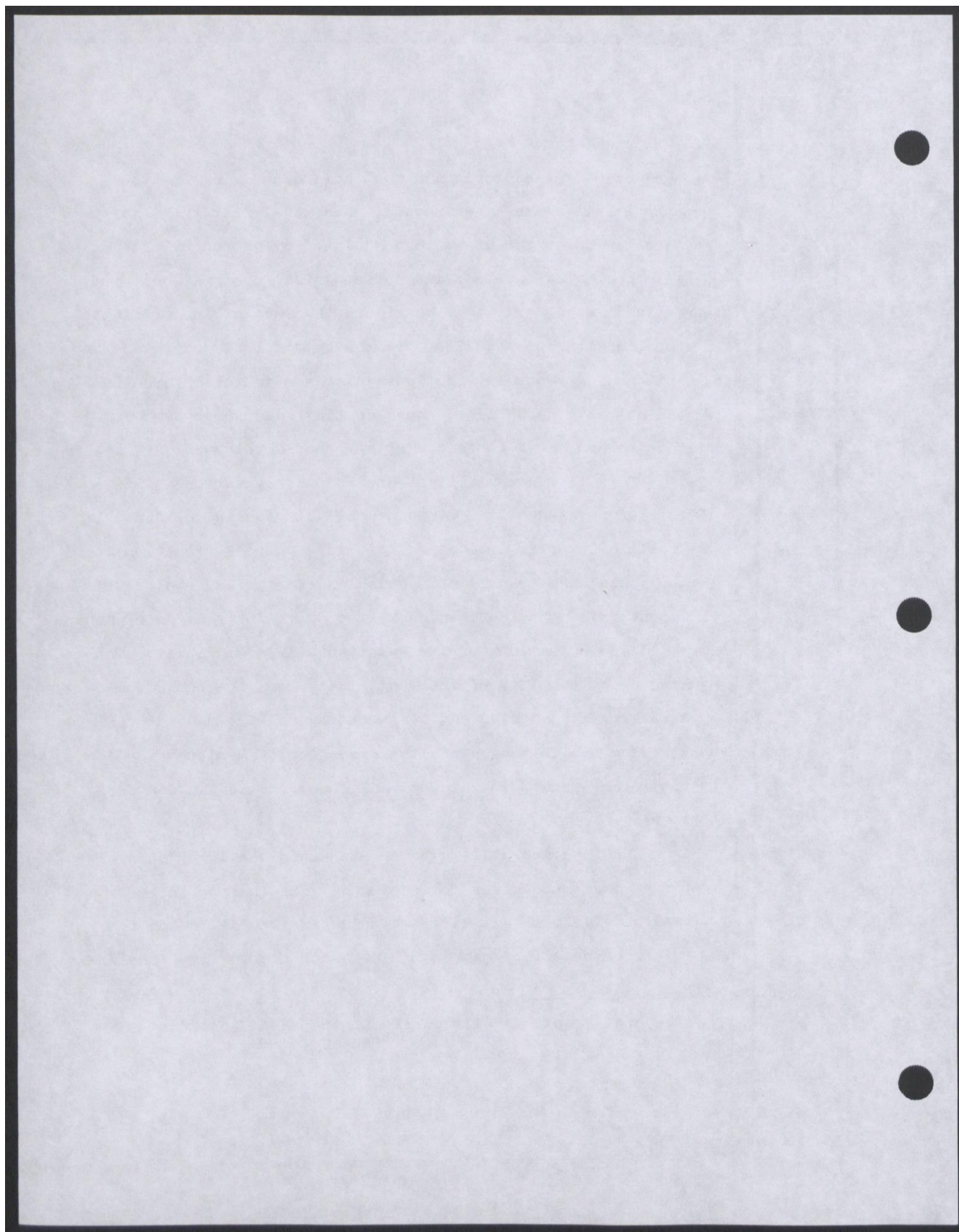
The Faustian will-to-power expresses the inner need of a Culture that recognizes toleration only as the non-interference with a field of activity, which ever attempts to impose its views on behalf of mankind. This accounts for the loneliness

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1. See post Chapter "Politics, Economics, The Machine".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 160

**Image ID:** 15212949



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 161

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of Faustian man, of which Lear on the Heath buffeted by man and Nature, and Hamlet are the tragic exponents. Where the lament of the hero expresses the essence of the Apollinian dramatic intention the inner distance of Shakespearean heroes is unbridgeable.

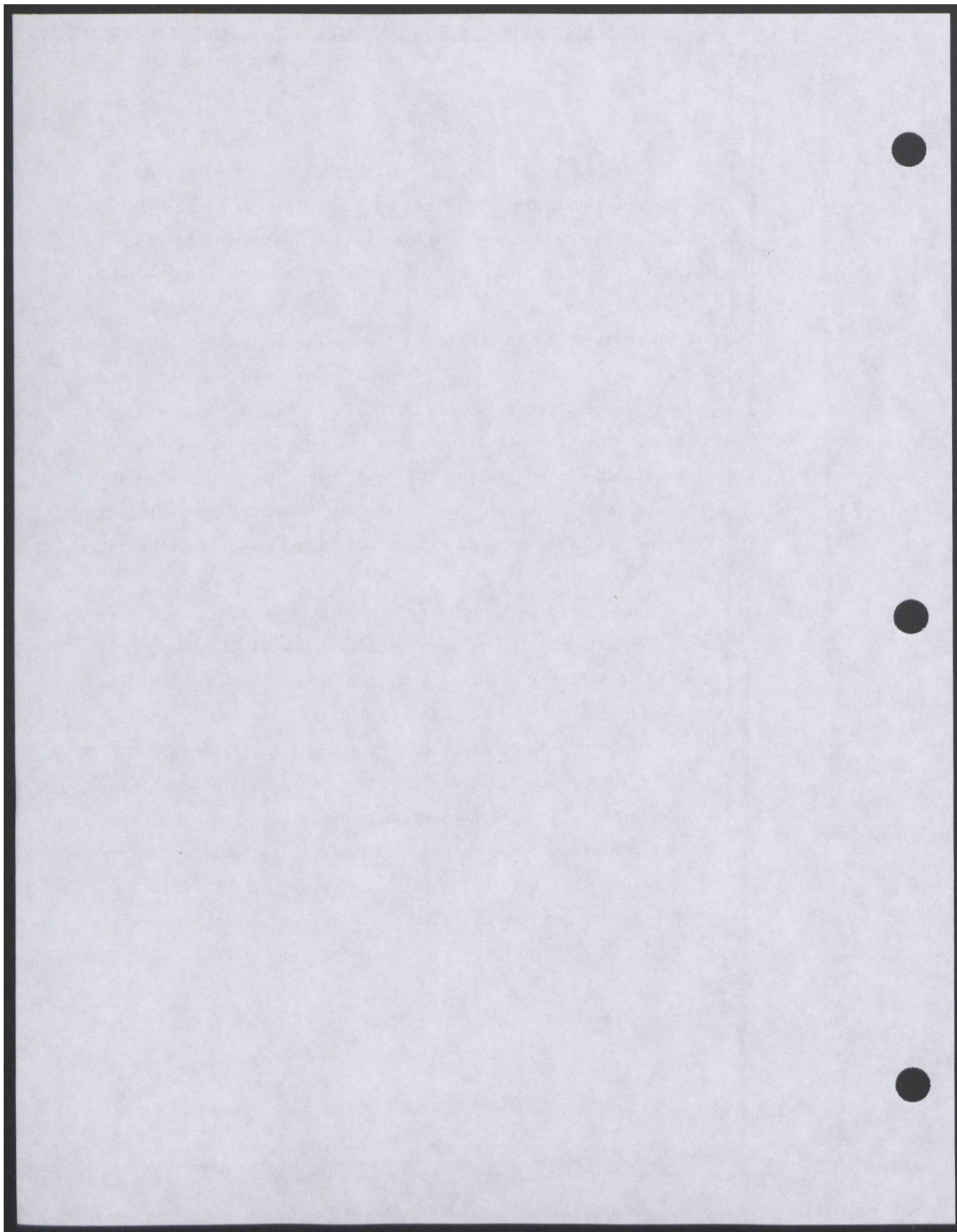
The ethics of the great deed which in Gothic times was felt as an inner experience in one's fight towards God, is transformed by the plebeian morale of the late culture into a Right-to-work. This is Socialism, which seeks to impose its views on behalf of all and which will soon press its concepts to the ultimate Faustian conclusion - the Duty to Work.<sup>1</sup> The ethical force of the West contains always the imperative, ever the "Thou shalt".

This then is Spengler's representation of the Faustian soul a boundless drive towards infinity, a will-to-power, a longing of a lonely ego in a boundless space that has lost its bliss with the Reformation and its God with the Enlightenment. In the years of autumn and approaching decline its major efforts will lie in the technical field before the advent of mysticism and Caesarism will stifle all intellectual activity. But just because Western man represents a transcendent view of history, he is eminently fit to write its morphology. The Classical could not encompass such a view. Its tragedy was the senseless incident. But the culture of Shakespeare, who lifts the incident

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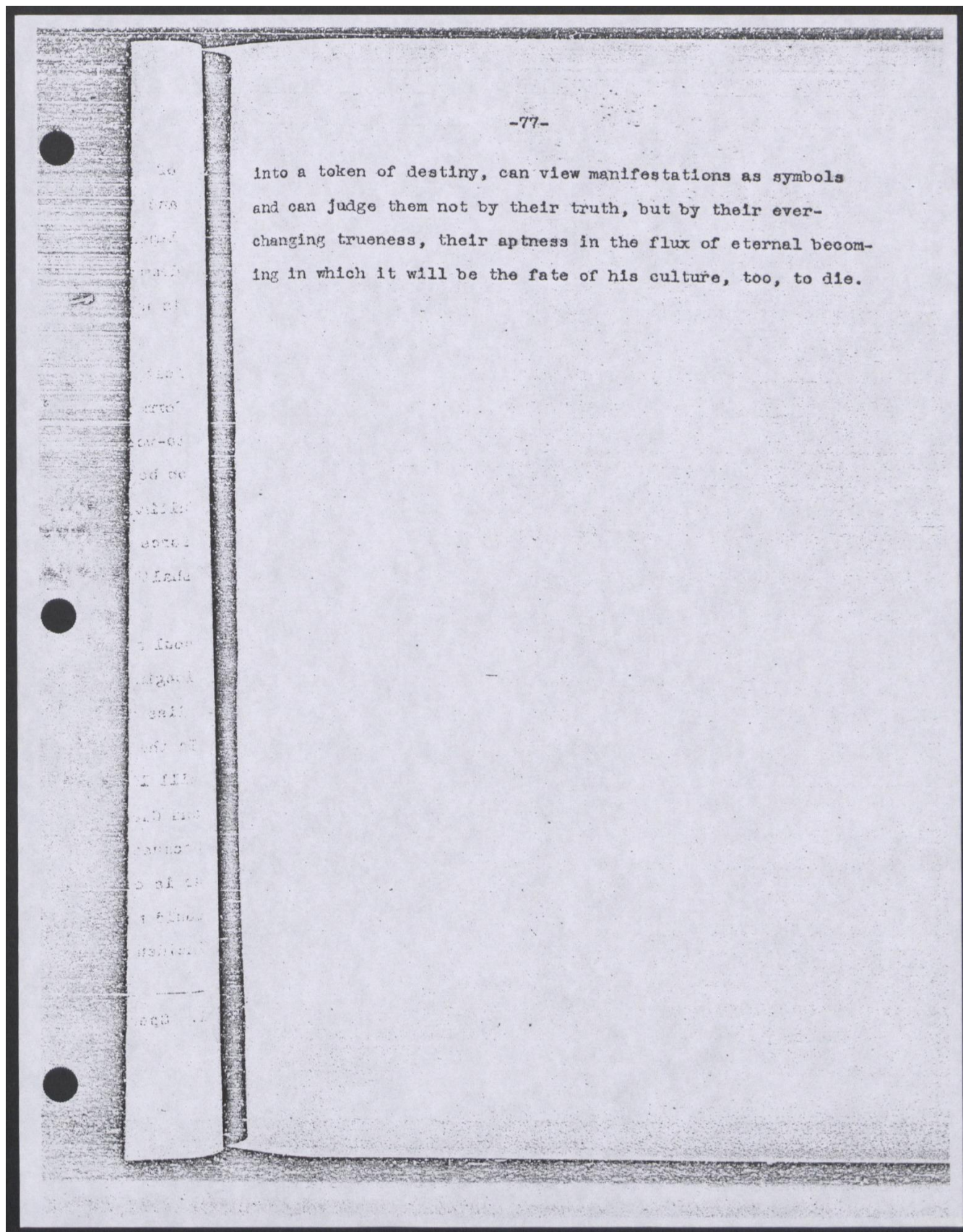
1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 372 - Written in 1919.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 162  
**Image ID:** 15212951



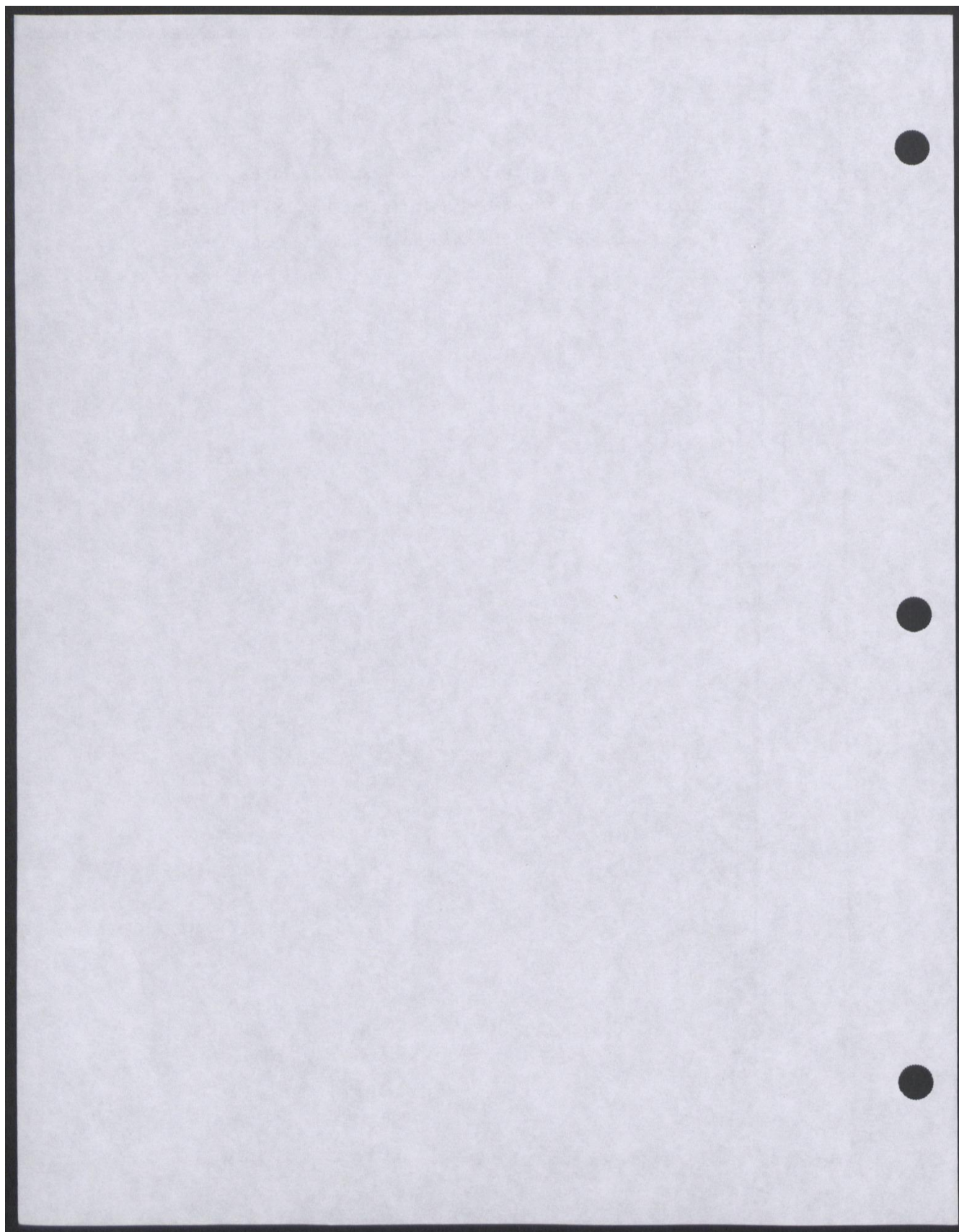
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 163

**Image ID:** 15212952



**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 164

**Image ID:** 15212953



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 165

Image ID: 15212954

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#### Pseudo-Morphosis

"In a rock-stratum are embedded crystals of a mineral. Clefs and cracks occur, water filters in and the crystals are gradually washed out so that in due course only their hollow mould remains. Then come volcanic outbursts which explode the mountain; molten masses pour in, stiffen and crystallize out in their turn. But these are not free to do so in their own special form. They must fill up the spaces that they find available. Thus there arise distorted forms, crystals whose inner structure contradicts their external shape, stones of one kind, presenting the appearance of another kind. The mineralogists call this phenomenon Pseudomorphosis".<sup>1</sup>

Historical pseudo-morphosis Spengler defines as the process in which an alien Culture hangs so heavily over the birth-place of a young Culture, that the latter can not attain its own inner development. Its spirituality is forced into strange forms, which are infused with new meaning, but at the same time serve to stifle the inner drive of the Culture's Youth. Such Cultures can only look on the strange form with all-consuming hatred, spending their latent creativity in half-hearted efforts, ever ready to burst through the fetters in a violent orgy.

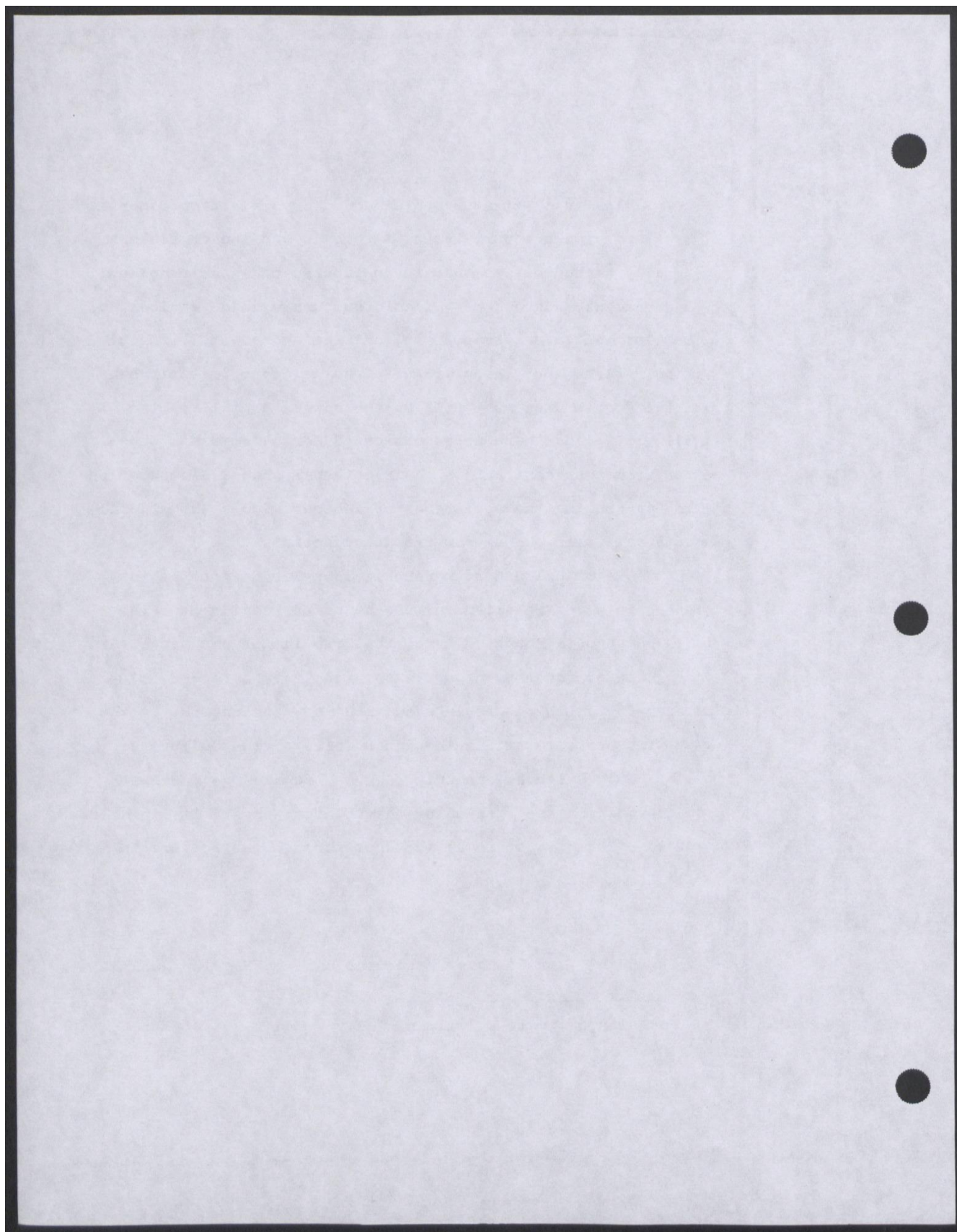
Such - for Spengler - was the case of Petrine Russia

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 189.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 166

**Image ID:** 15212955



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 167

Image ID: 15212956

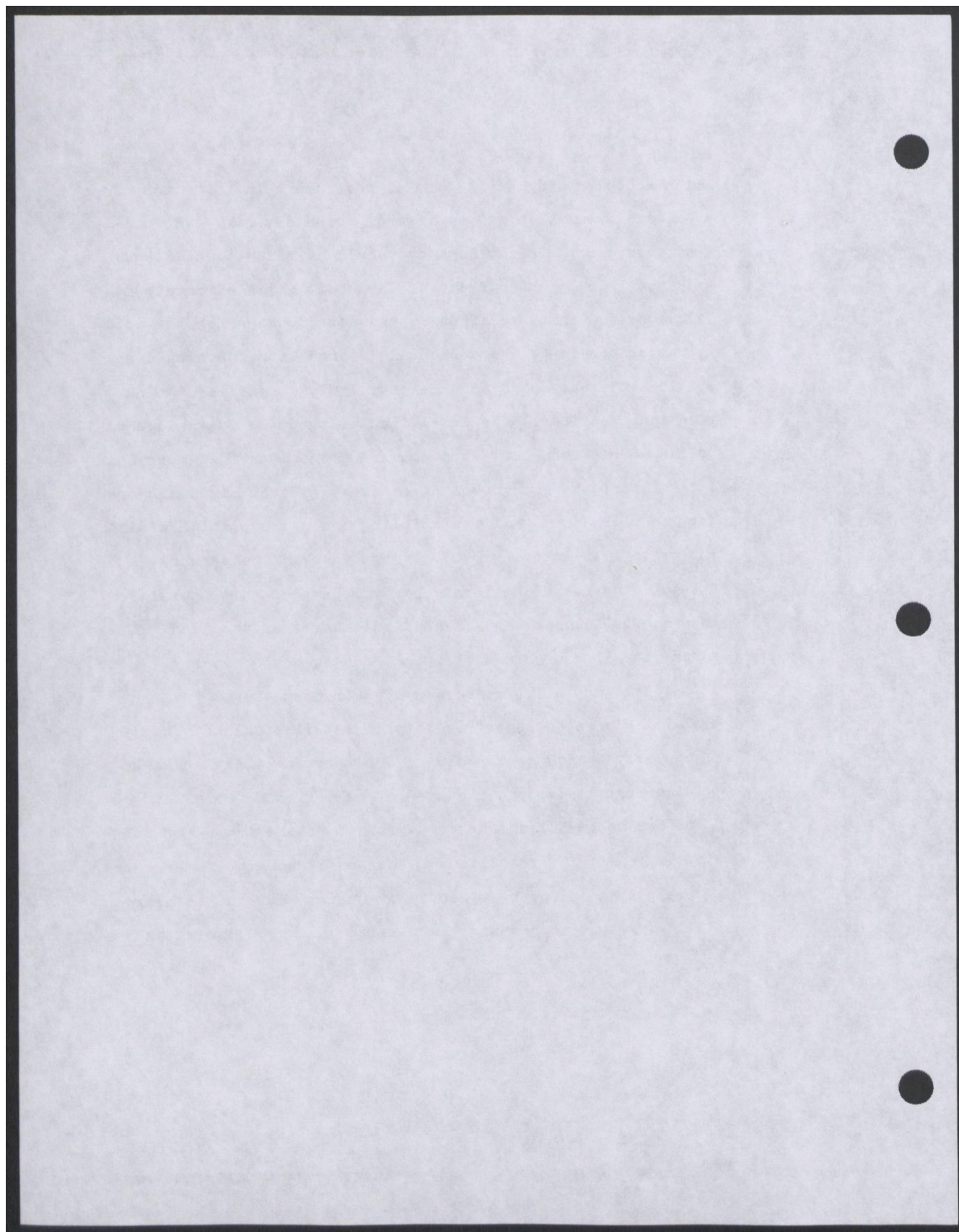
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which accepted a dynastic form of government in imitation of a Culture from which it was inwardly remote. Only the formless power of the early Romanovs could have succeeded in guiding this young soul, which felt the large cities as effervescent illusions and which remained a peasantry longing for the soil no matter how large the cosmopolis. Thus there developed no aristocracy that embodied a destiny, only a senseless aping of alien practices. The intelligentsia grew up as an adjunct to the Court, ever bent on discovering problems that were not felt against the background of a peasantry that mixed a hatred for the alien form that was stifling the culture, with a disgust with its own overgrowth.<sup>1</sup> Dostojevski, the peasant, and Tolstoi, the man of Western society represent this opposition. "The one could never in his soul get away from the land, the other, in spite of his desperate efforts, could never get near it".<sup>2</sup> Tolstoi is the spokesman of Petrinism - even in his denial. His rejection of society is intellectual, his hatred of property based on economics. The very inability to shake off the West leads to his hatred of all existing forms and he therefore becomes the true precursor of Bolshevism. For Bolshevism is merely the rebellion of the lowest strata of the Petrine society, that has ever talked about Christ, but in its heart, meant Marx. It represents the final debasing of the metaphysical

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 194.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 194.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 168

**Image ID:** 15212957



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by the social and becomes thereby a new form of the Pseudo-  
<sup>1</sup>  
morphosis.

Dostojevski is the true enemy of this upheaval representing in his soul the future of Russia. All agitation about social reform, all technical schemes for world betterment remain equally meaningless to him. Just as Christ, he would have felt no difference between working for one's own material benefit or the mere social betterment of others. For how can Communism aid the agony of the soul?<sup>2</sup> Thus Dostojevski embodies the destiny of Russia, the victim now of the last stages of its Pseudomorphosis, the forms of which are ever filled with the deep spirituality of the boundless plain and which will be swept away just as its predecessor, without hatred, by the inner logic of the actualizing of the Russian soul.<sup>3</sup>

So it was with the Magian soul which grew up in the forms of the Classical after Actium. All the mystic longing of that East, where strange tales of a Messiah were current, which felt the existence of an immanent God, a Yahwe, Ahuramazda or Marduk-Baal with the certainty of an apocalyptic fulfillment had to realize itself in the West in the forms of the Classical cult. The Appollinian gods were deities of places, bodies of the sensuously near. Each locality possessed its divinity to

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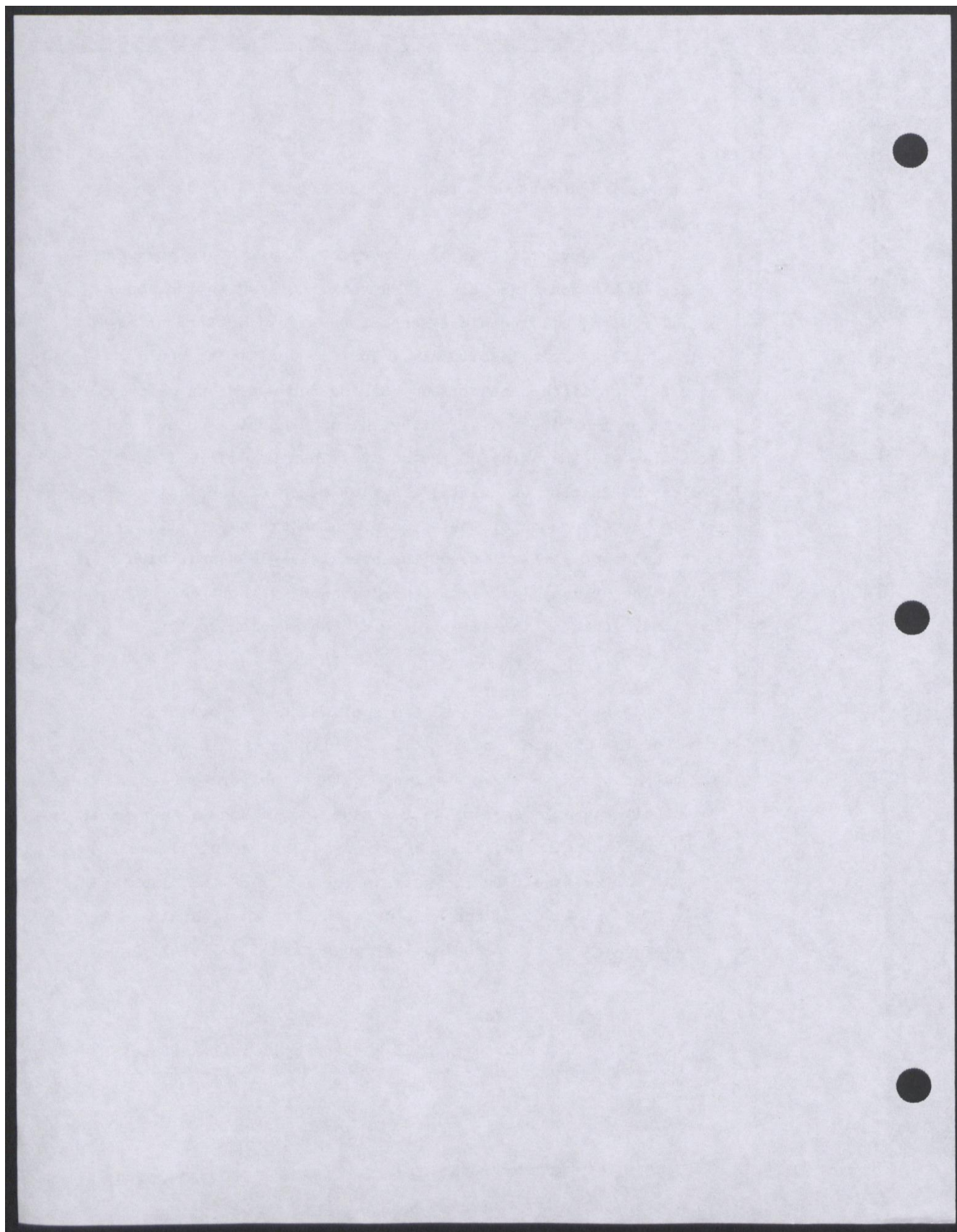
1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 195.

2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 217.

3. Attention is drawn to the description by Bedell Smith of Christmas mass in Moscow. - B. Smith - My Three Years in Moscow.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 170

**Image ID:** 15212959



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 171

Image ID: 15212960

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which homage was due. This explains the altar to the unknown Gods, which Paul as a child of the Pseudo-morphosis misunderstood in a monotheistic sense. This was designed for gods not known by name whom the foreign sailors at the great seaports worshipped.<sup>1</sup> Thus Classical toleration could extend to all sects that made no claim to exclusive validity and any transgression of these limits resulted in the intermittent persecution of the Stoa in Athens and the Christians in Rome.

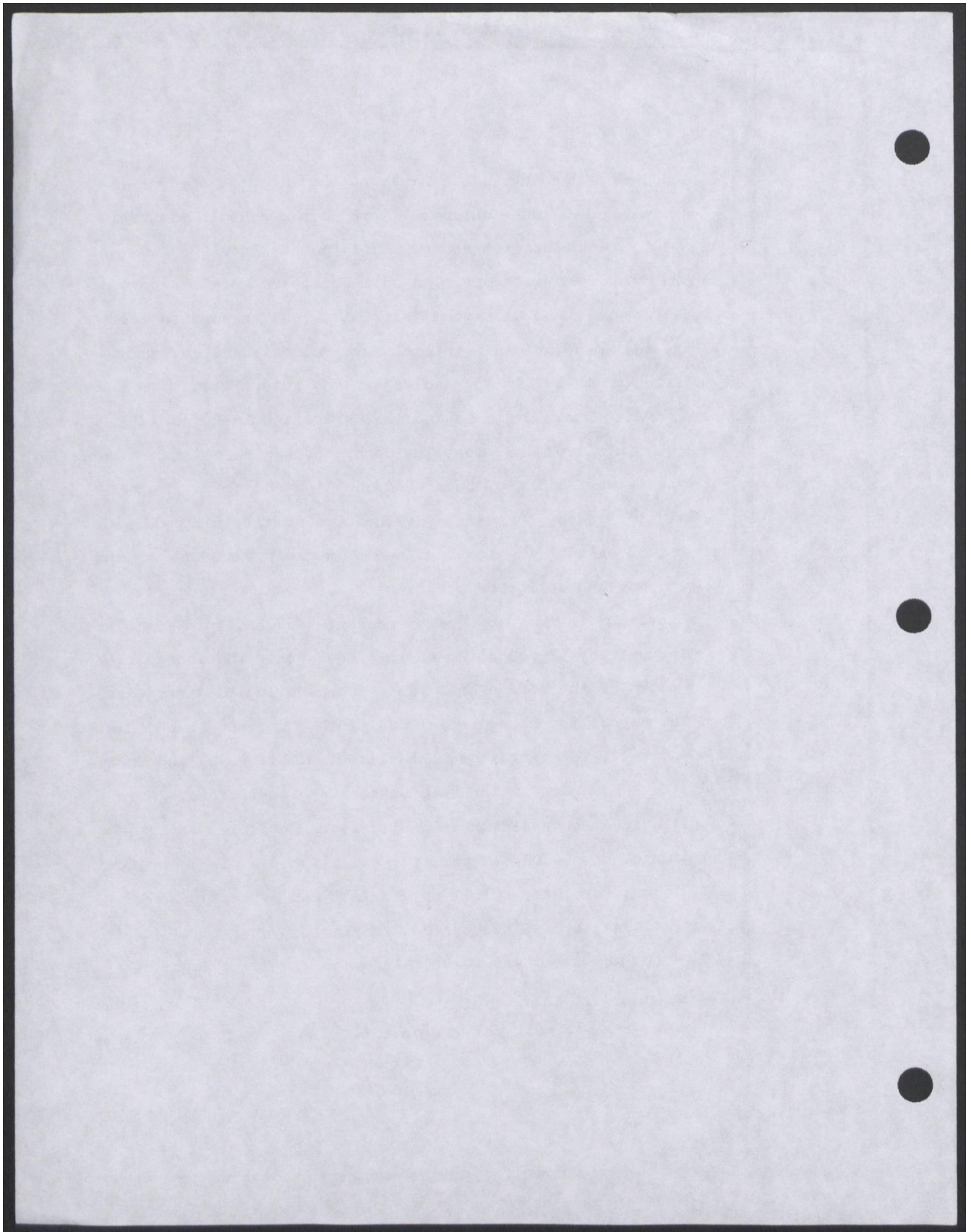
This explains, too, the change of world-feeling implied by the universal law of reason of the Stoa and the mystery-cults typified by the cult of Mithras. Formerly the god was conceived as adhering to the place of worship but now a community of any two believers constituted a church. The Spirit of God hovering in the above, ever ready to descend into his elect is the universal production of this age. Only the incomparable symbolism of the person of Christ, representing the very essence of the opposition between fact and truth, Time and Space, History and Causality distinguishes Neo-Platonism, Mithraism and Christianity. A Magian nation is a consensus of believers. When Constantine recognized Christianity as the official religion, he did not acknowledge a cult but established a new community. But long before, the spirit of the East had permeated Roman institutions, symbolized by the transfer of the capital to Byzantium and the Divus cult, which made the Roman Emperors

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 404.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 172

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 173

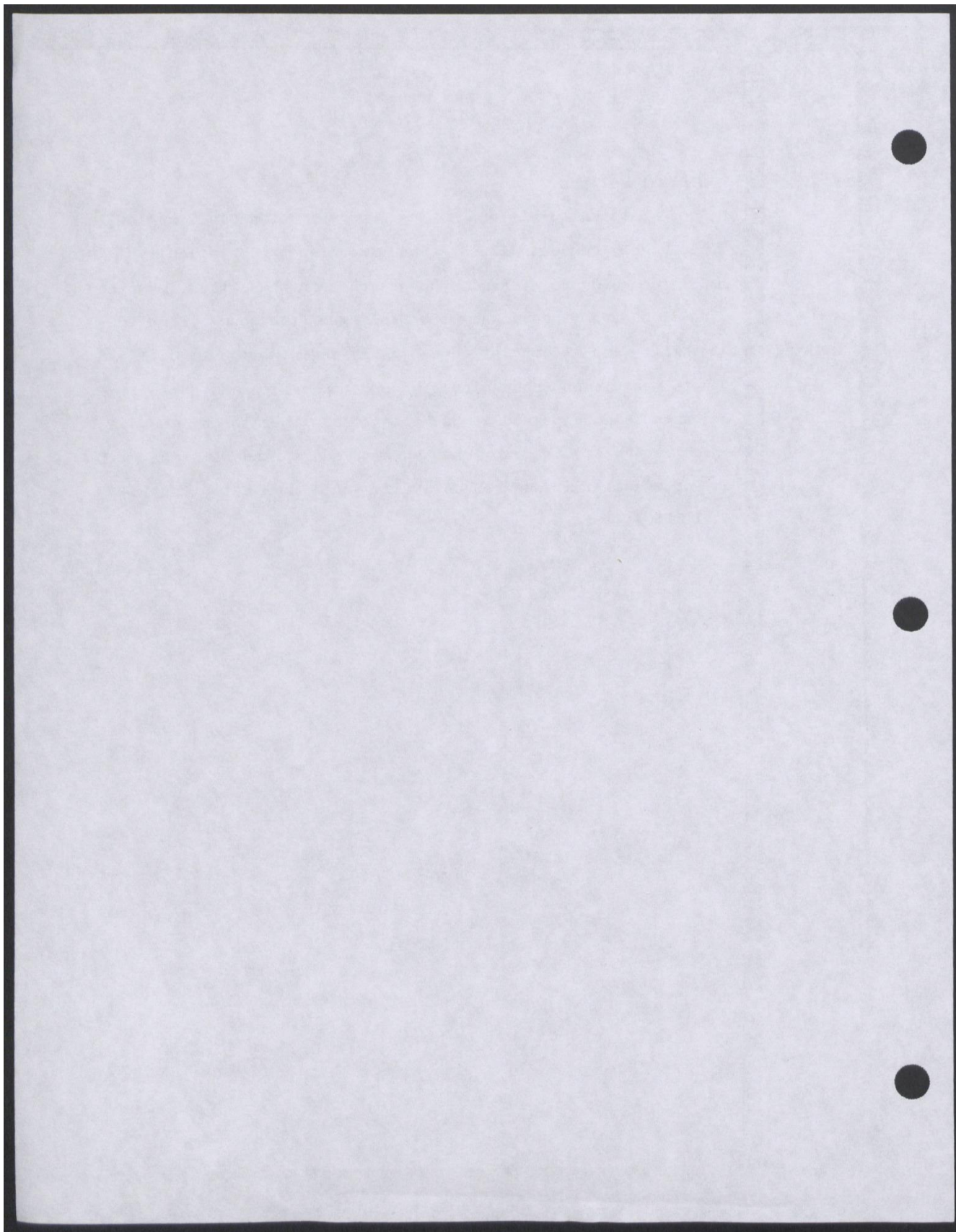
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the first Caliphs.

Yet the spirit of the West was that of a Civilization, cold, highly conceptualized. The direction of Christianity under the guidance of Paul, who preached in the cities, remained ever aloof from the apocalyptic feeling of the countryside in the East. The attempt of conceptually defining the Logos idea led to the violent secession of the Monophysites and Nestorians. And when Islam appeared it was greeted as liberator by the spirit which recognized its own inner essence and spread with the rapidity of a soul that was robbed of its youth and feels its time is limited.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 174  
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### The Magian Soul

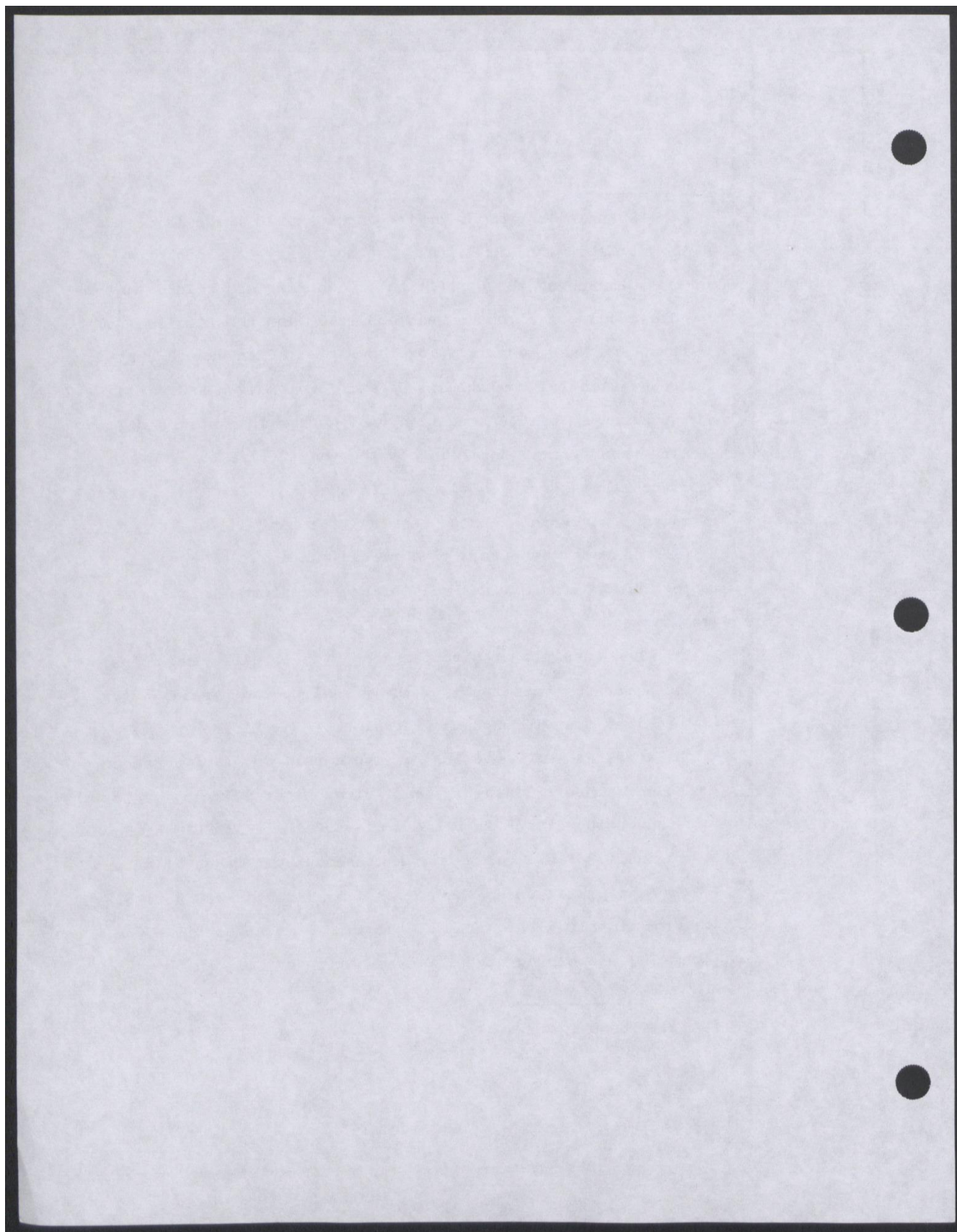
Spengler's symbol for the Magian world image is a cavern, filled with dim light. In the uneasy tensions of waking consciousness, the opposition of becoming and being, that the Classical conceived as beam and load, and the Faustian felt as force and Mass, consists for the Magian of an unsure swaying of substantial realities. Up and down, heaven and earth are substances that contend with one another in a cosmos revealing the Divine. Death is not the end of life but a death substance that struggles with a life-substance for the mastery of man.<sup>1</sup> Out of this basic yearning, with man the theater of battles between the powers of darkness and evil, emerges the Concept of God the Divine Mediator who transforms this state from torment into bliss.<sup>2</sup>

Man consists of a soul and body, both different modes of the same substance deriving their reality and participating in the light only through the infusion of the Divine Pneuma, which serves as the condition for the heroic deeds of a Samson, the holy wrath of Elijah, the enlightenment of Solomon. This infusion of the divine into the bodies of the faithful, binds the community of believers into a consensus and makes it at one with the enigmatic power above. Thus man as body and soul belongs to himself alone. But at the same time he contains something else, something higher, an emanation of God, which

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 237.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 236.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 176

**Image ID:** 15212965



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 177

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precludes error but also makes totally meaningless a self-asserting Ego. Will and thought are not prime-phenomena, but already manifestations of the divine in Man.<sup>1</sup>

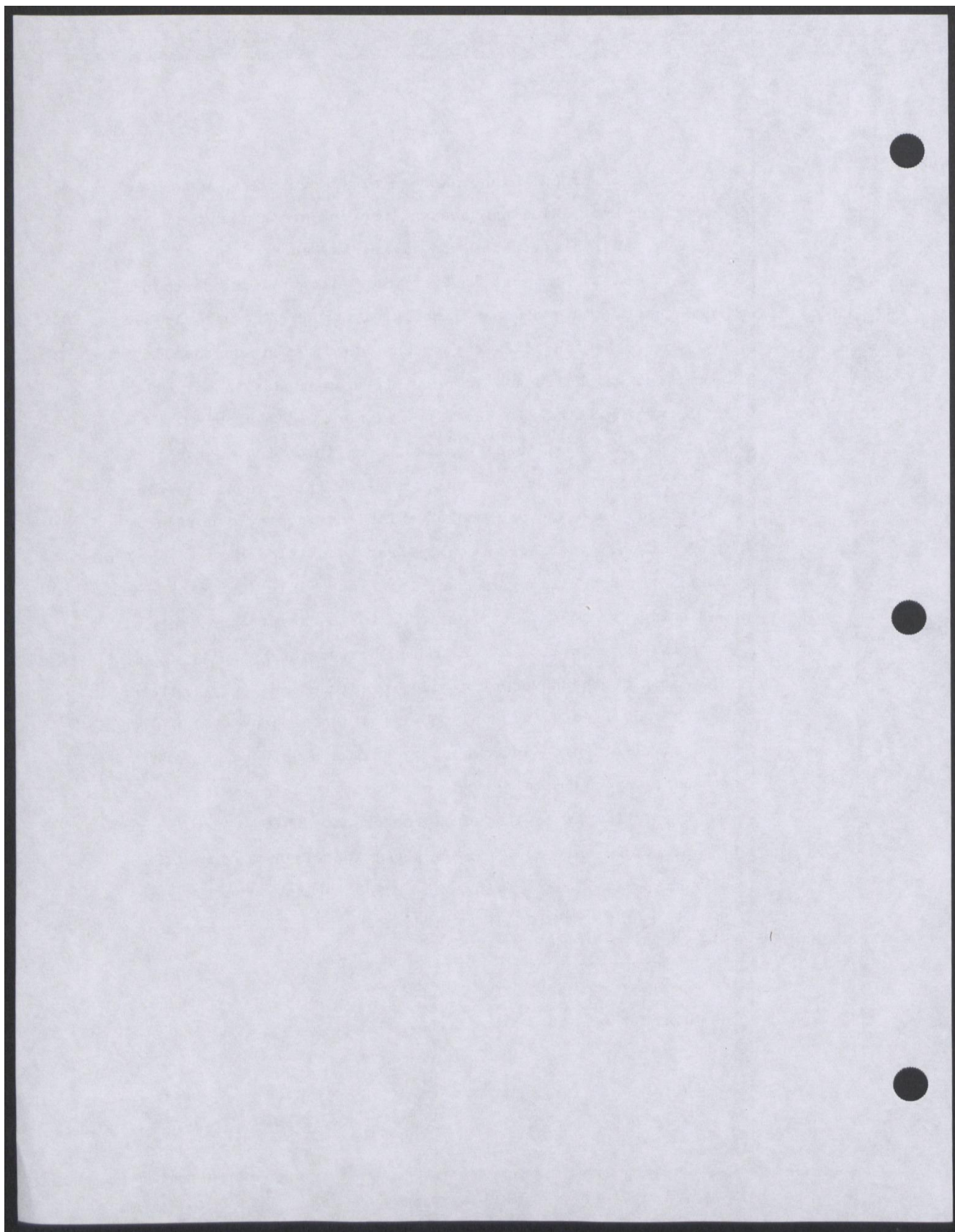
God is immanent in every manifestation of phenomenal appearance, the one Cause immediately underlying all visible workings. Magian science concerns itself with apprehending the substance which appears in only different modes in actuality, with purging it of its "foreign" element, with alchemy.

Time, too, is cavernlike. The thrusting outward into infinity of the Faustian soul, develops into the divine plan for salvation, into the essence of which any inquiry constitutes profanation. The Magian soul, first identified the story of the world with the history of Man, into inexorable stages of world-beginning, world-development and a world catastrophe, which contains the sanction of the moral history of humanity.<sup>2</sup> The operation of the autocratic will, precludes not only individual causes and effects, not only obviates the concept of the miraculous but also denies any necessary relation between sin and punishment, any claim to reward for virtue. Man's reality consists of his participation in the divine pneuma, which after its infusion allows only will-less resignation (Islam=resignation) into the mysterious working out of God's plan. "Magian man received Grace, but did not acquire it."<sup>3</sup> Job is the Magian Faust.

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 235.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 240.
3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 241.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 178

**Image ID:** 15212967



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 179

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Three emanations of the divine occur, God, the Word of God, the Spirit of God. The consensus of the faithful, imbued with the Spirit of God, is beyond the possibility of deception. "My people can never agree in error", said Mohammed.<sup>1</sup> This explains the early church-council, which the West in its re-valuation of all things Magian, transformed into a political concept for the limitation of a dynamic Papacy. The God-as-Word represents the substantial infusion of the divine into the sacred texts. This form of Revelation is the rule in the Magian religion. The only change that an unalterable Koran permits is commentary, leading to the development of an exegesis with mystical undermeanings, the Halaka of which the Gospels in early Christianity and the Talmud of Judaism are examples.<sup>2</sup>

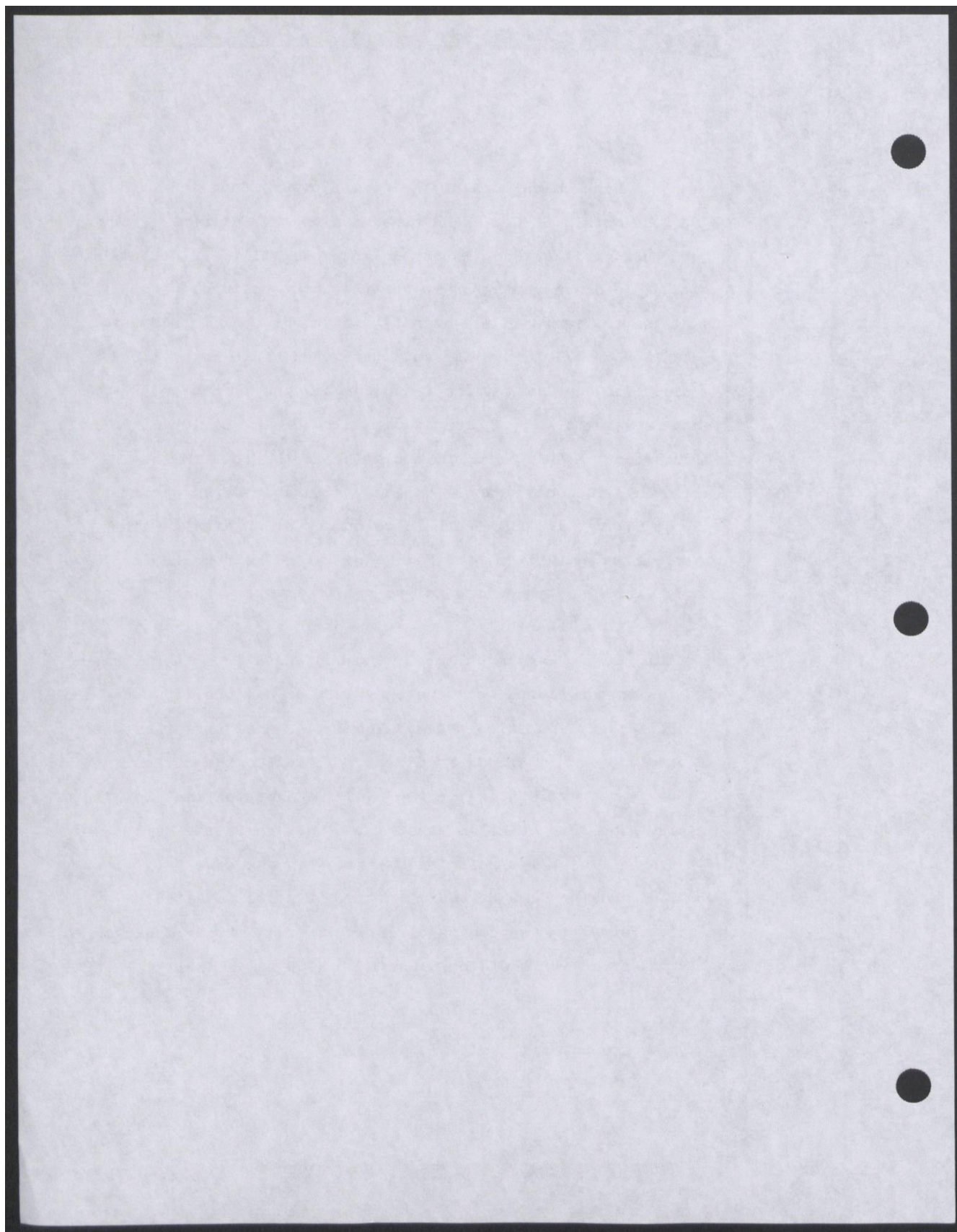
It follows that a separation of Church and state is impossible in the Magian culture. The consensus is itself a church, its law in the sacred book the only idea of nationality open to the believers. But also the development of a strong priesthood is precluded. Man stands in direct relation to the divine in so far as he participates in the pneuma and beyond that nothing avails. The true priest of the Magian culture is the hermit, the true bliss of its religion ecstasy when the soul is at one with God and the dark forces of materiality are defeated.

Yet until the coming of Islam this Magian world had to live under the forms of the Classical which it gradually

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 243.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 245.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 180

**Image ID:** 15212969



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 181

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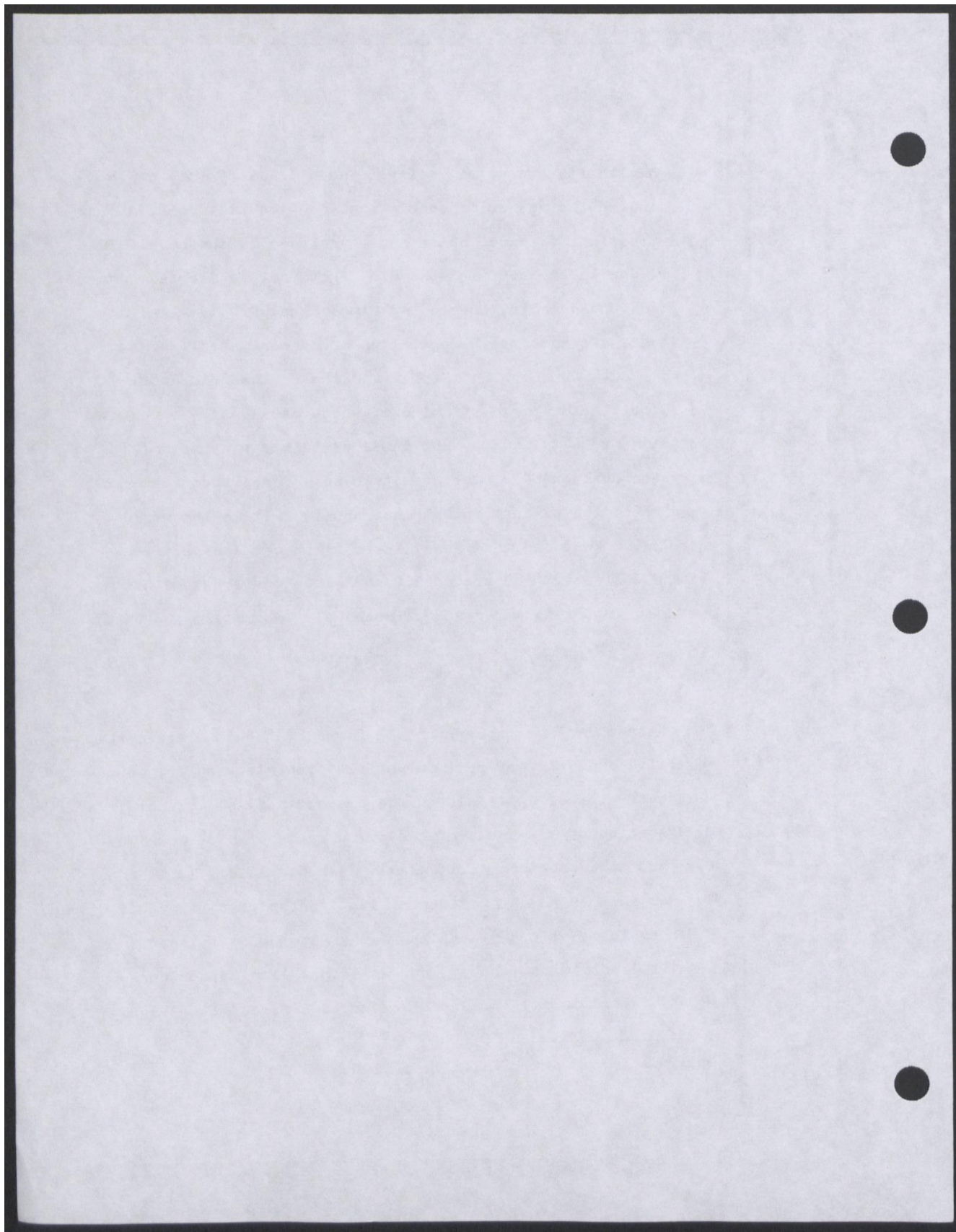
infused with its own spirituality. The pillars of the temple moved inside the mosque, a cupola replaced the flat roof, giving the impression of space, but a space enclosed in the cave. Into it a window in the roof let the dim light that, reflected from the gold-ground walls, created an atmosphere of fairy-land unreality, the scene for the operation of an omnipotent, ever-present God. Such was St. Sophia and the Pantheon in Rome.<sup>1</sup> This, too, is the world of Spinoza, whose *causa sui*, represents the immanent Deity and to whom inner certainty was the only criterion of knowledge, the geometric method representing merely a manifestation of Western Pseudomorphosis. It is the world that Christ knew and that Faustian religion can scarcely comprehend. It petrified around 800 and since the Crusades has persisted in the fellah-state of unchanging dogmatism and creative impotence.

Spengler's metaphors on the forms of the soul are deeply suggestive and yet they rest on an intuition striving for absolutes, ever expressing itself in the crassest possible manner. His evocation of the souls of the cultures is of a persuasiveness that makes abstract criticism appear dogmatic. Still one must ask whether he was not describing tendencies, instead of unchangeable relations. Achilles is hardly a body, placed in a position he did not choose, nor does the Iliad assume constancy of personality. Indeed the very essence of its tragedy

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1. Spengler *op. cit.*, Vol. II. p. 229.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 182  
**Image ID:** 15212971



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consists of the efforts of a man to master fate, to exact conditions from this world and of the final acceptance of his humanity, his recognition of limits. Polybius, moreover, wrote a philosophy of history that compares favorably with many creations of the "historical" Faustian Culture, and the scheme of which is very similar to Spengler's concepts of gradual, inevitable degeneration. Spinoza, may be a product of the Magian<sup>1</sup> soul, but Friedrich has characterized him with equal persuasiveness as a product of the Calvinist concept of pre-destination, his conatus God's sanction to the "elect".<sup>2</sup> The idea of a consensus represents perhaps an emanation of the Magian soul, but not exclusively so. The history of the Law of Nature in Western philosophy demonstrates the pervasiveness of his concept; Rousseau's General Will reveals its theoretical application to politics.

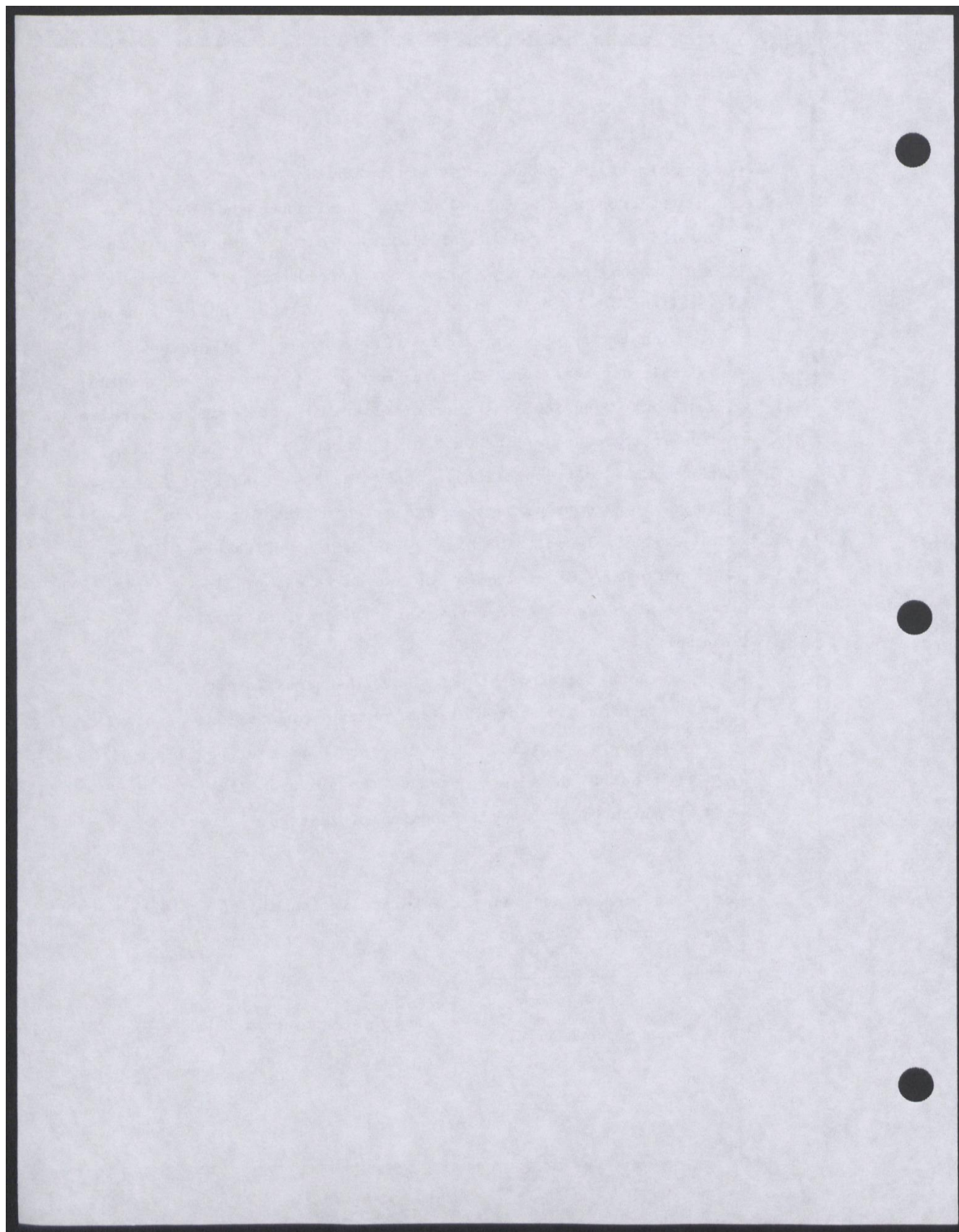
Thus the eloquence of the soul-images is nevertheless unable to hide the fact that alternative explanations of equal conviction are possible. This does not disprove Spengler's concepts but it does cast doubt on the inexorability of a development which constitutes a function of these soul-images.

Spengler considers the interrelationship of cultures, except for Pseudo-morphosis of only incidental importance. It

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1. Friedrich - Inevitable Peace - p. 143 et. seq.
  2. For my brief analysis see post Ch. "History and Man's Experience of Morality".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 184

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was an accident that the Spaniards landed in Mexico, but inward necessity that the Maya Empire collapsed, since it already had reached the fellah stage. The adoption of Christianity by the west represents but an incident, a symbol which was then necessarily infused with the specific Gothic religiosity. Yet such a strict separation seems untenable. It can hardly be maintained that this outpouring of spirituality was not itself influenced by the forms which it used. The superimposition of a ripe dogma, of the universality of law on an essentially primitive community, undoubtedly permeated the later history of what was so significantly called: "Holy Roman Empire German<sup>1</sup> by Nation". Spengler himself has shown how the forms of language determine the structure of cognition, the meaninglessness of the equation  $S = \frac{1}{2}gt^2$  unless expressed in words. How much more strongly must the transfer of a high legal tradition, a profound philosophy have affected a nascent culture?

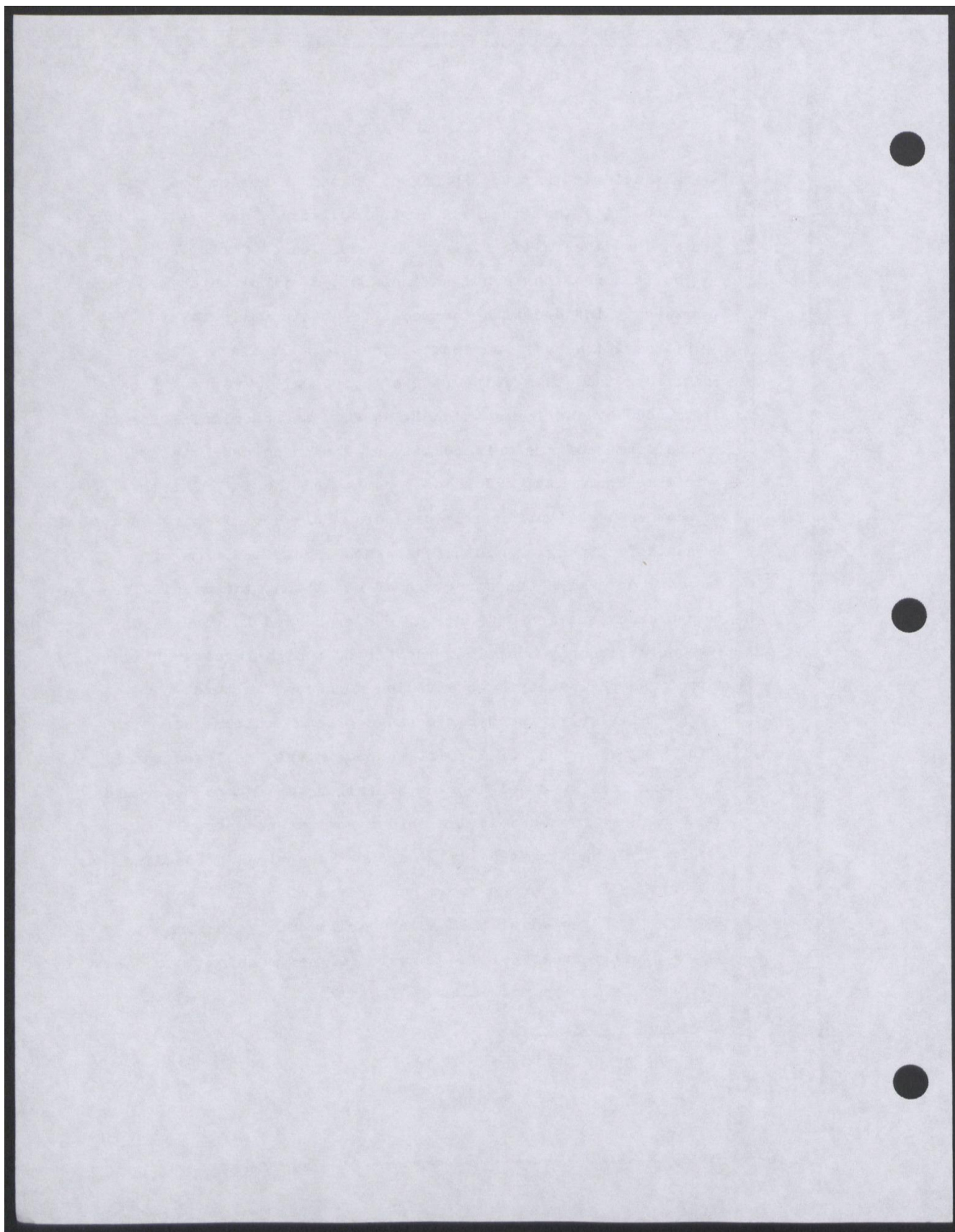
Similarly, the dynamic stage of each culture seems to involve a radiation, of its influence, in art, religion, and political form over neighboring societies, as Eduard Meyer and Toynbee show. Conversely the border regions are never free from foreign influence particularly during the periods of decline. The British influence on India has proved of significance regardless of the adaptation which parliamentary government may eventually receive. The infusion of new meaning into established forms can not be equivalent to original creation.

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 113.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 186

**Image ID:** 15212975



**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 187

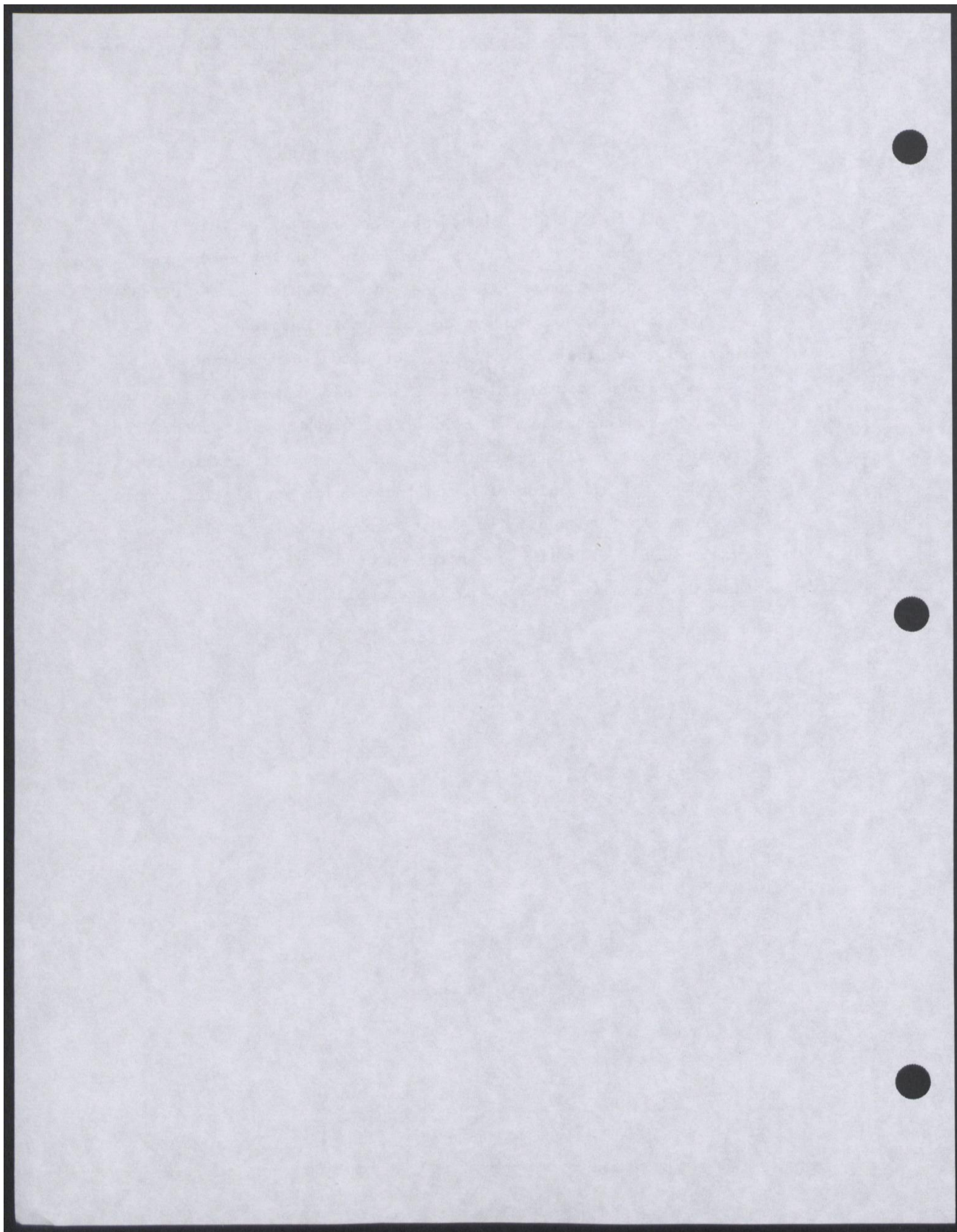
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To be sure, at times, Spengler recognizes this. He speaks of the effect of Christianity on a soul already pre-disposed to reverence. He regrets the shackles put by Classical mathematics on Western science until Descartes. He expresses gratification about the fortuitous circumstance that freed Western painting through the loss of almost all the classical fresco art. But what does fortuitous mean in such a context? Is it not a recognition of the interrelationship of cultures, an admission of a continuation of certain forms which moreover in turn condition their user? Spengler fails to explain just what factor underlies any continuity of ideation or how the selection of symbols is accomplished.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 188

**Image ID:** 15212977



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 189

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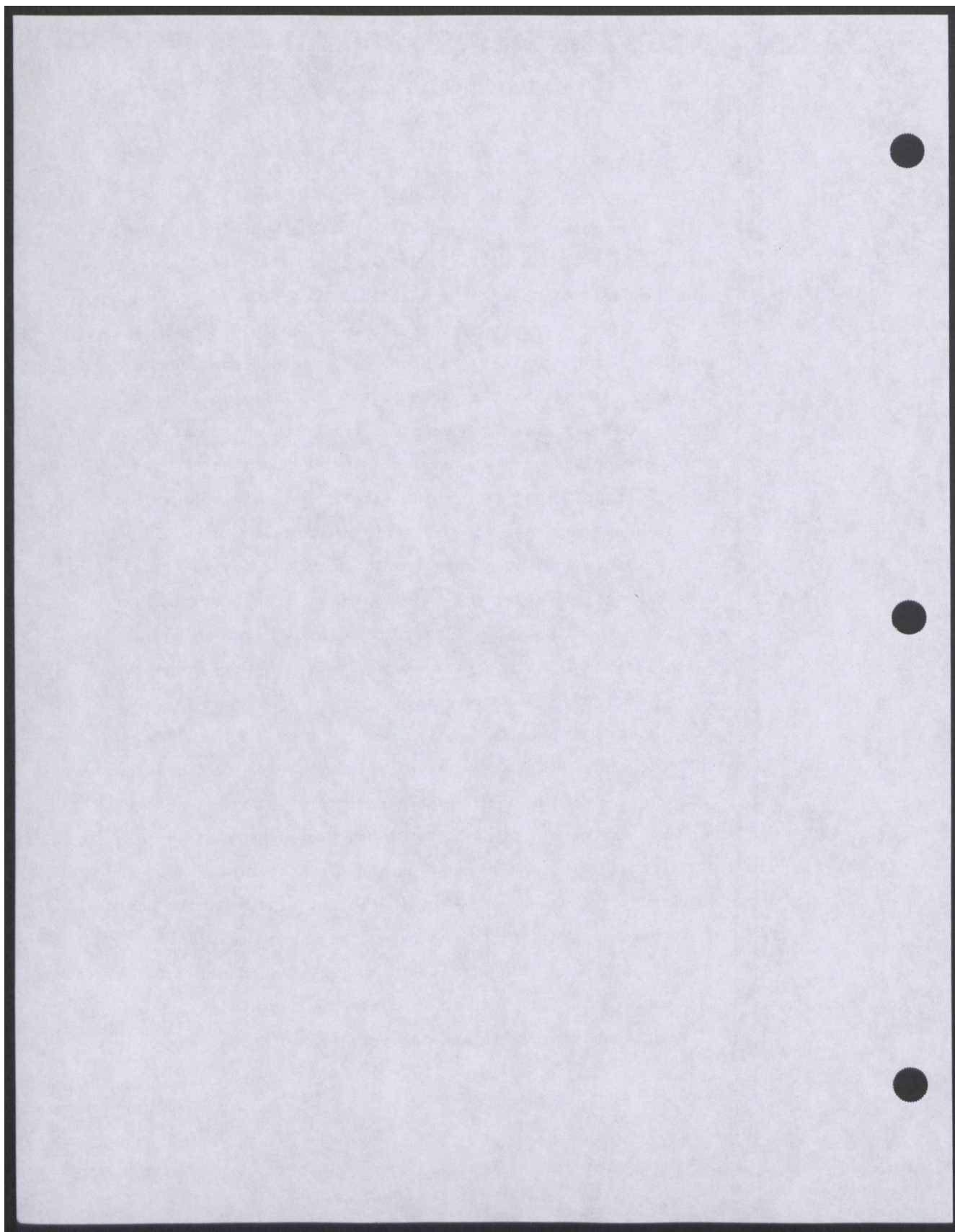
Politics, Economics, The Machine.

The metaphysical opposition between becoming and being, the assertion of the ultimate supremacy of Time over Space, form the basis of Spengler's political theory. Just as the development of the culture constitutes an organic growth characterized by the gradual dominance of a waking-consciousness doomed to self-destruction, so politics exhibits an eternal conflict between blood and concept, tradition and dogma. The ageing of the Culture is accompanied by the decline of that sureness of political form which signifies a mature organism. Mere interest replaces the earlier subordination to an all-embracing idea, money supplants tradition as the motive-force. At each stage, however, the race aspect of life triumphs over its causal representation, first in the victory of economics over abstract political systems and finally in the emergence of the naked power of Caesarism.

Spengler considers politics as the essence of life, manifested in a will for survival, its criterion self-assurance, that allows only the choice between victory and ruin, not between war and peace. He distinguishes two aspects in the destiny side of life, the preserving and the mastering. They are symbolized by the separation of the sexes. The woman is history and represents the life of the race; the man makes history. The woman accepts only with difficulty that other history which takes her sons from her and the man ever experiences a conflict of duties between the public and the private manifestations of

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 190

**Image ID:** 15212979



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 191

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Destiny, the sword and the spindle side of being,<sup>1</sup> the State or the Family emanation of directional Time.

Property, too, as a trait of race, belonging to History and reduced to a concept only with the advent of the Cosmopolis, exhibits this duality. It is expressed in the twin attributes of possession: Having as power and having as booty. From the feeling of power stems conquest, politics and law; from that of booty derives trade, spoil and money. This explains the superiority of money over dogma in the constitutional struggle of the early civilization, but the emergence of money as the dominant form in turn heralds a decline of political vitality.

Spengler argues that all success in history, war and "in that continuation of war by other means called politics"<sup>2</sup> has been the product of unities that found themselves "in form". A being is in form in the same sense as the term is used in sports. When athletes are in form the ease of their performance hides the difficulty of their acts. A style, that has become second nature, signifies an art period "in form". A political unit is in condition when its tradition breeds a high average, enabling it to dispense with the great men, whose incidental appearance frequently does more harm than good by the void their death leaves in the flow of events.<sup>3</sup>

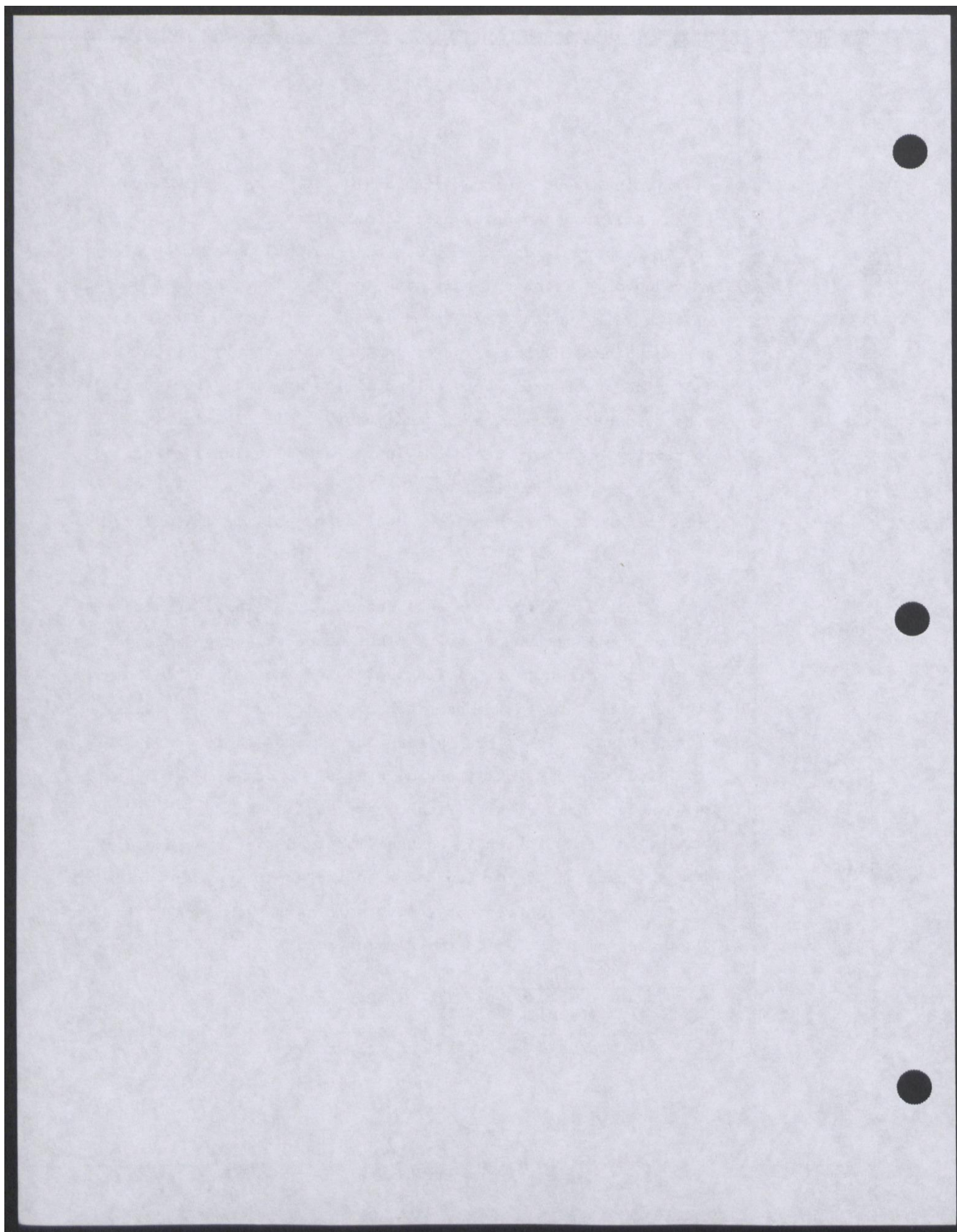
1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 327.

2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 330.

3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 444 - See also T. S. Elliott: Notes towards a Definition of Cultures.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 192

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 193

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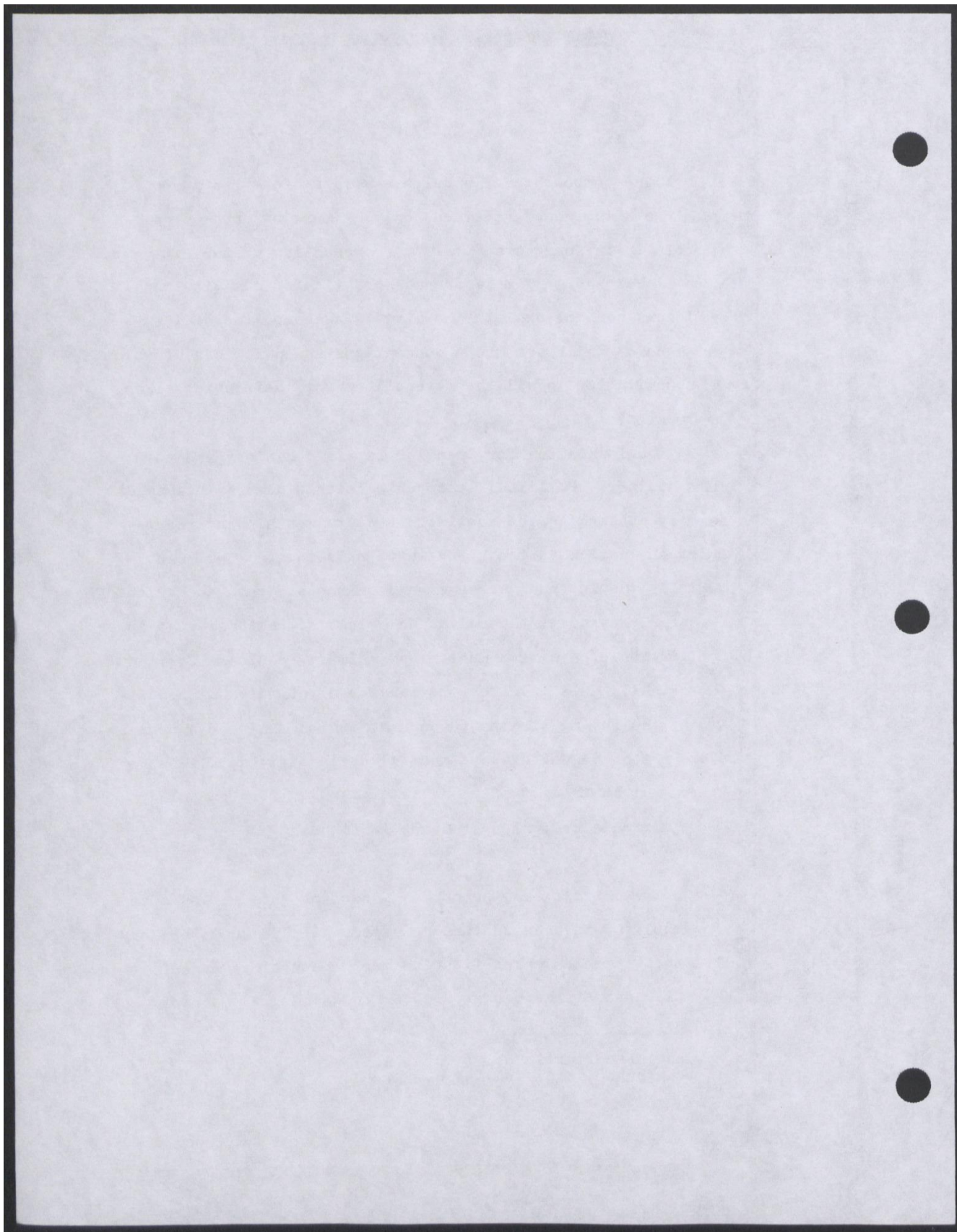
The components of a Culture attain "form" as a people, which grows to inward greatness only against other peoples. A people is in form as a "State", representing history at rest. Since it belongs to Time a mere description of constitutional provisions can not explain the state's essence, the real expressions of which are those conventions and practices of which the constitution is all the more silent for their being taken for granted.

World history for Spengler is state-history and not class-history. Political leadership belongs always to a small minority possessing the instinct of statesmanship and representing the nation in the struggle of existence.<sup>1</sup> The more naturally the internal arrangements of the state have developed, the surer they adapt themselves to crisis situations. The inner constitution of a nation must always aim at readiness for the outer fight. This involves the management of internal opposition by the ruling stratum in such a fashion that the energies of the nation do not exhaust themselves in party conflicts and treason not be thought of as a last resort.<sup>2</sup> Foreign policy is the ultimate criterion of domestic fitness.

The private and the public aspect of the destiny-idea are symbolized in each culture by a peasantry which is history and a society which makes it and comes to consciousness of itself only against the background of a peasantry. A society

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 369.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 367.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 194  
**Image ID:** 15212983



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organizes itself as Estates of which only two have symbolic significance. Nobility and Priesthood constitute Spengler's symbols for the antinomy of becoming and being, Destiny and Causality, Time and Space.<sup>1</sup> The nobility represents the cosmic, the eternal flow of events, the exclusive validity of the deed. Its educational ideal is training (Zucht), acquired only by living in an environment and a customary ethics which bases itself on its self-evident existence not on its truth.<sup>2</sup>

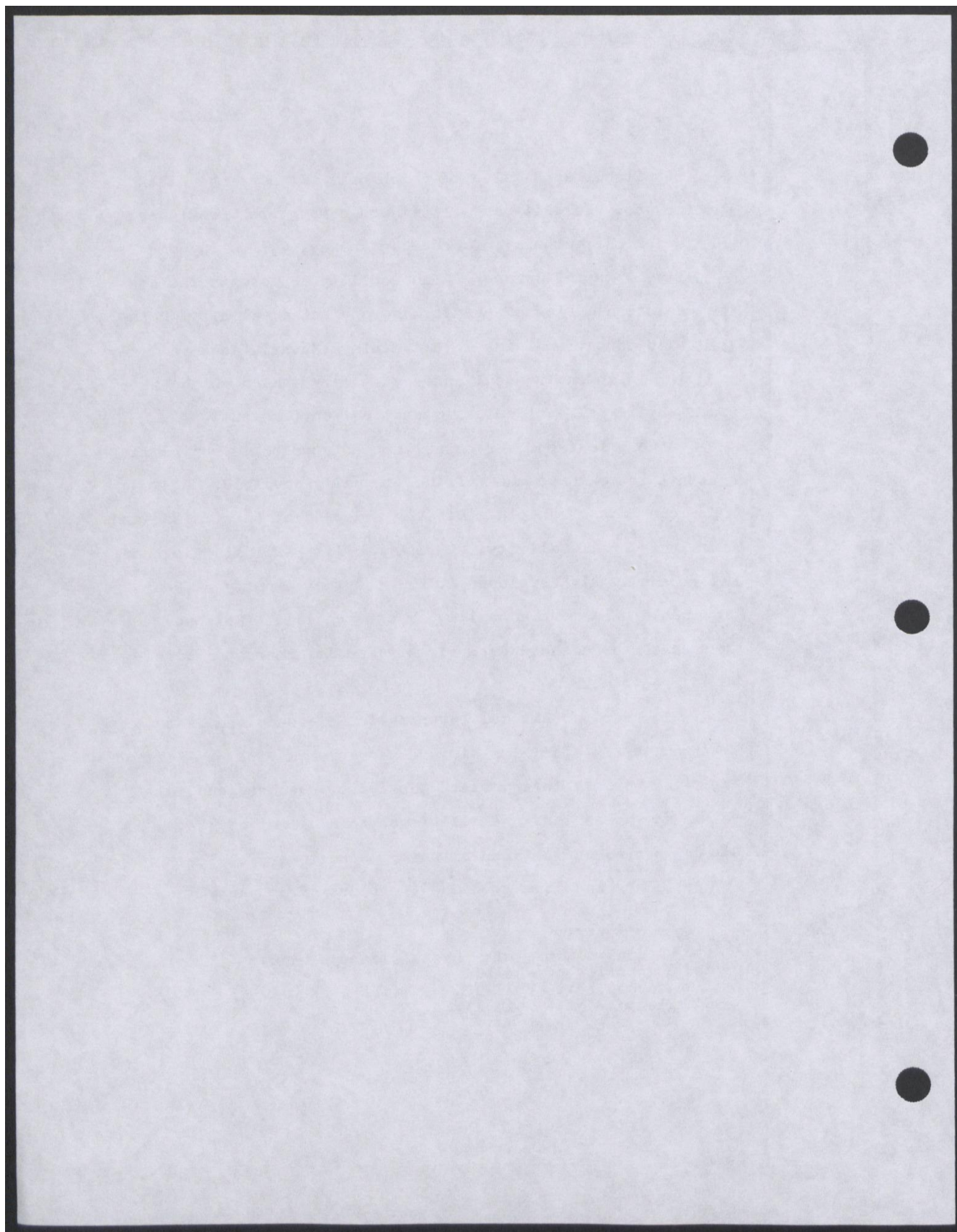
The priesthood serves as the mediator to the enigmatic and constitutes the symbol of the eternally possible. Its education consists of shaping (Bildung), dependant on studies, and a moral of eternal validity. A ripe nobility exhibits finished living, the highly developed Priesthood that dignity of bearing which denies mere actuality as unessential. "Celibacy excludes the priesthood from history and its character indelible from time."<sup>3</sup>

The early political organization of feudalism bases itself on the Estates, its hierarchy of orders viewing the kind merely as a primus-inter pares. The ruler possesses subjects only in so far as they owe allegiance to a vassal of his. Private law serves as the bond of union; a customary ethics, stresses honor and loyalty. The two sides of property are

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1. For an analysis of this inconsistency see post - "Conclusions" the outpouring of a soul.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 341.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 337.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 196

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 197

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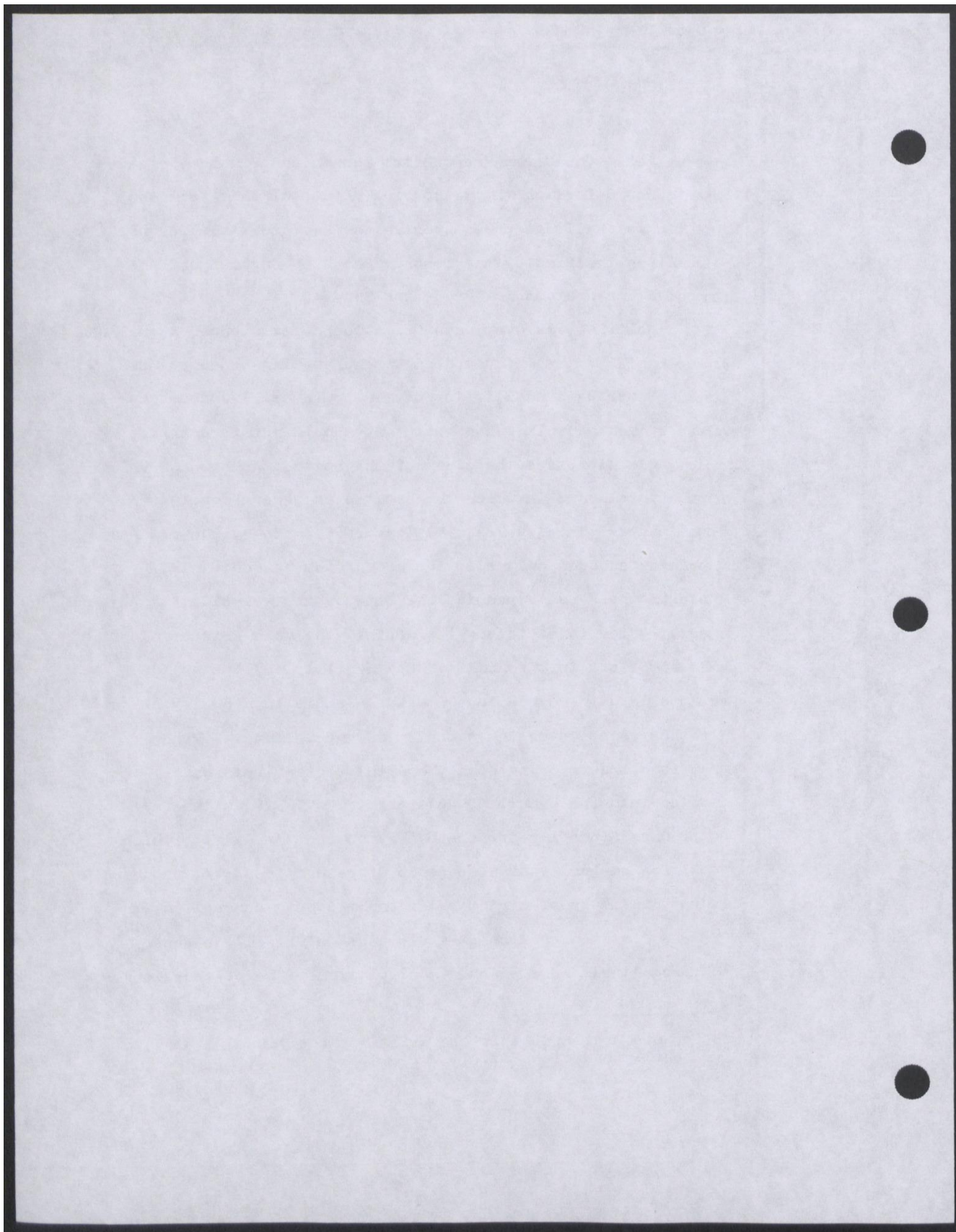
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here united. The Norman conquests, though consequences of a dynamic world-feeling the outpouring of a soul that felt the infinite as challenge were nevertheless managed with prudent calculation typified by the Domesday book of England and the financial arrangements of Frederick 2nd.

Politics, as every manifestation of existence, Spengler's scheme exhibits the gradual dominance of waking-consciousness. The idea emerges that life is not merely to be lived but involves a task as well. The writ that should run through the whole realm expresses the claim of the State, the care of which extends to all and in which the Estates represent merely functional parts. This evokes a violent resistance by the old feudal orders, subdued only with the aid of the nascent Third Estate in the First Tyranny, the time of the Abbassids, the Fronde. After this victory the affinity between Estate and State, implicit in the ability of a nobility to live an idea develops into the dynastic state which exhibits a purity of form that constitutes the maturity of the Culture.<sup>1</sup> Feudal unity is overcome by national, and the fact of rulership elevated into the symbol of sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> The Faustian feeling of Care finds its profoundest symbol in the dynasty which actualizes the unity of a sequence of generations. It produces Cabinet diplomacy of strict rules and masterly conception, the very embodiment of action-at-a distance, of a will-to-power asserting itself in a planned manipulation of force-relations.

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1. For discussion of this inconsistency see "Conclusions".
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II, p. 378.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 198  
**Image ID:** 15212987



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 199

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The development of the nation-state is a symptom of the emerging dominance of the cities. The city spirit is practical, valuing objects by their utility, incapable of living a tradition. The unity of the Third Estate results from its opposition to the political dominance of the nobility. The age of conceptual controversy about liberty begins. Freedom for the emancipated understanding of the city is always freedom "from" something, the ever finer subtilizing of what should be an inner experience. In the Baroque, the First Tyrannies political controversy was the manifestation of the pulse of breeding, but the Third Estate constitutes merely a community of waking-consciousness in the educated, whose numina are systems elaborated with an eye to their inner consistency, without regard to their pertinency.

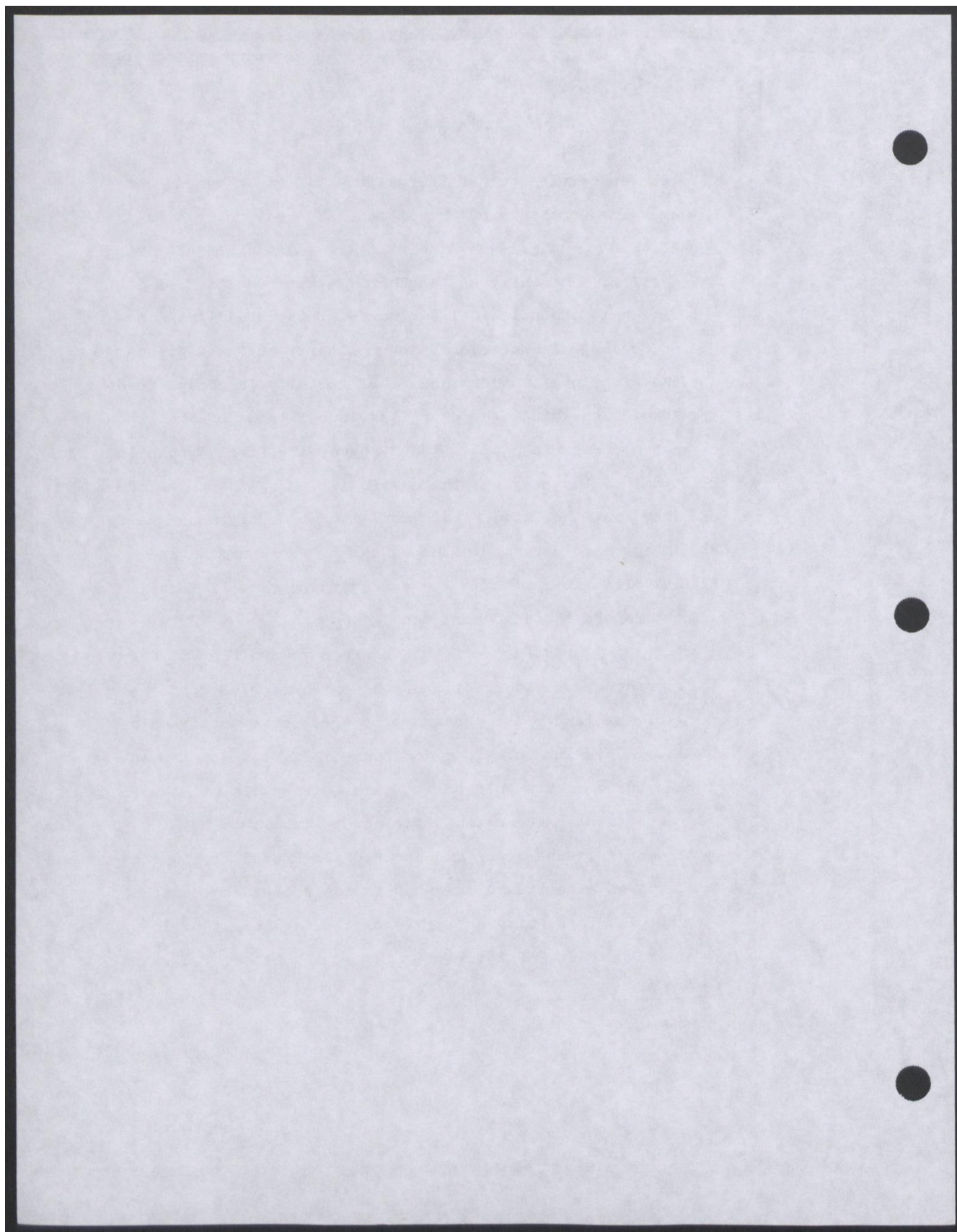
But "the effects of truths are always different from their tendency".<sup>1</sup> Abstract money appears divorced from the value of the land. Its concern with freedom is merely as a tool for achieving political dominance. It does not ask public opinion but attempts to form it. Its interest is not the franchise but electioneering, not the party-membership but the party machine. The power and booty outlook separate in the nobility, as do cult and learning in the priesthood. The history of all "Late Cultures" exhibits a ceaseless struggle of money against law, of intellect against tradition. But money

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 401.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 200

**Image ID:** 15212989



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 201

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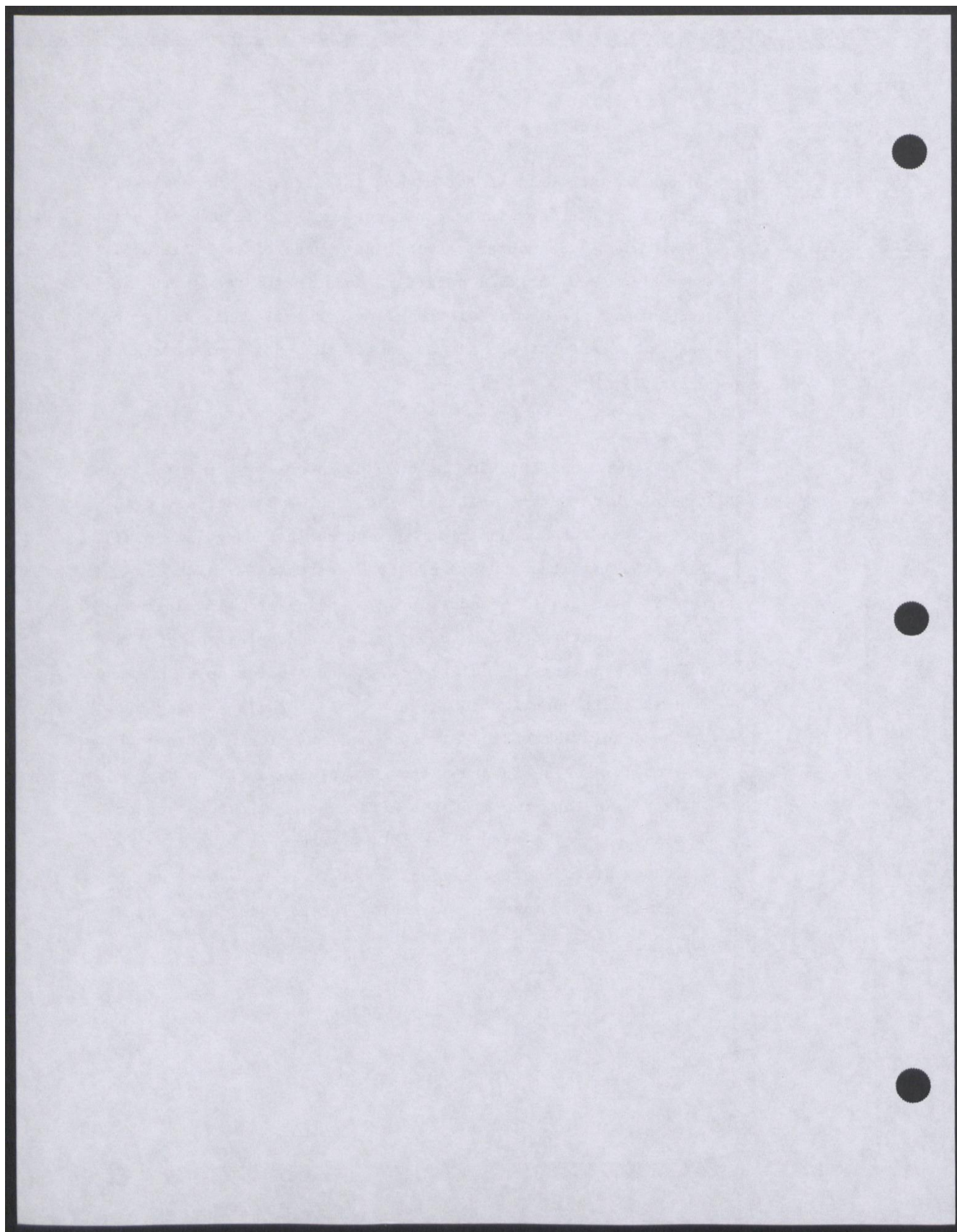
belongs to the world of facts, and intellect to the realm of truths with the inevitable consequences. "Intellect rejects money directs" characterizes the last phase of each Culture.<sup>1</sup> The tragic irony of this period resides in the fact that the theorists of freedom are in the final analysis only assisting money to be effective. At the end of this development stands Napoleonism.

Spengler finds in England the laboratory in which both sides of Third-Estate politics, the ideal and the real, graduated. Here the Fronde triumphed and so the bourgeoisie could grow up in the strong forms of the First Estate, which disarmed it with its inner superiority<sup>2</sup> and never allowed training to be substituted for breeding in the development of its tradition. Basing its actions on the self-evidence of England's greatness,<sup>3</sup> it substituted the absolutism of class-delegation for the absolutism of the State, which in Britain never attained the symbolism of an inward idea. Its place was taken by "society", as the symbol of the nation being "in form" under the class-regime; a word which in the French rationalists became the vehicle for the expression of their hatred of authority. In England, however, authority was well-defined. It

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 402.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 444.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 392.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 202

**Image ID:** 15212991



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 203

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resided in the Parliament, which as a creation of the Baroque embodied the cosmic flow of the Culture's maturity and therefore had music in it.<sup>1</sup> The genealogical principle was represented by the upper stratum of society, which divided itself according to the relative predominance of the power or the booty outlook, into a "respectable" and a "fashionable" party. Though the State's care for all was replaced by a frank assertion of class-interest, the organization of the major parties was such that they represented all effective members of society.<sup>2</sup> The Parliamentary style represented the British equivalent of Cabinet diplomacy.

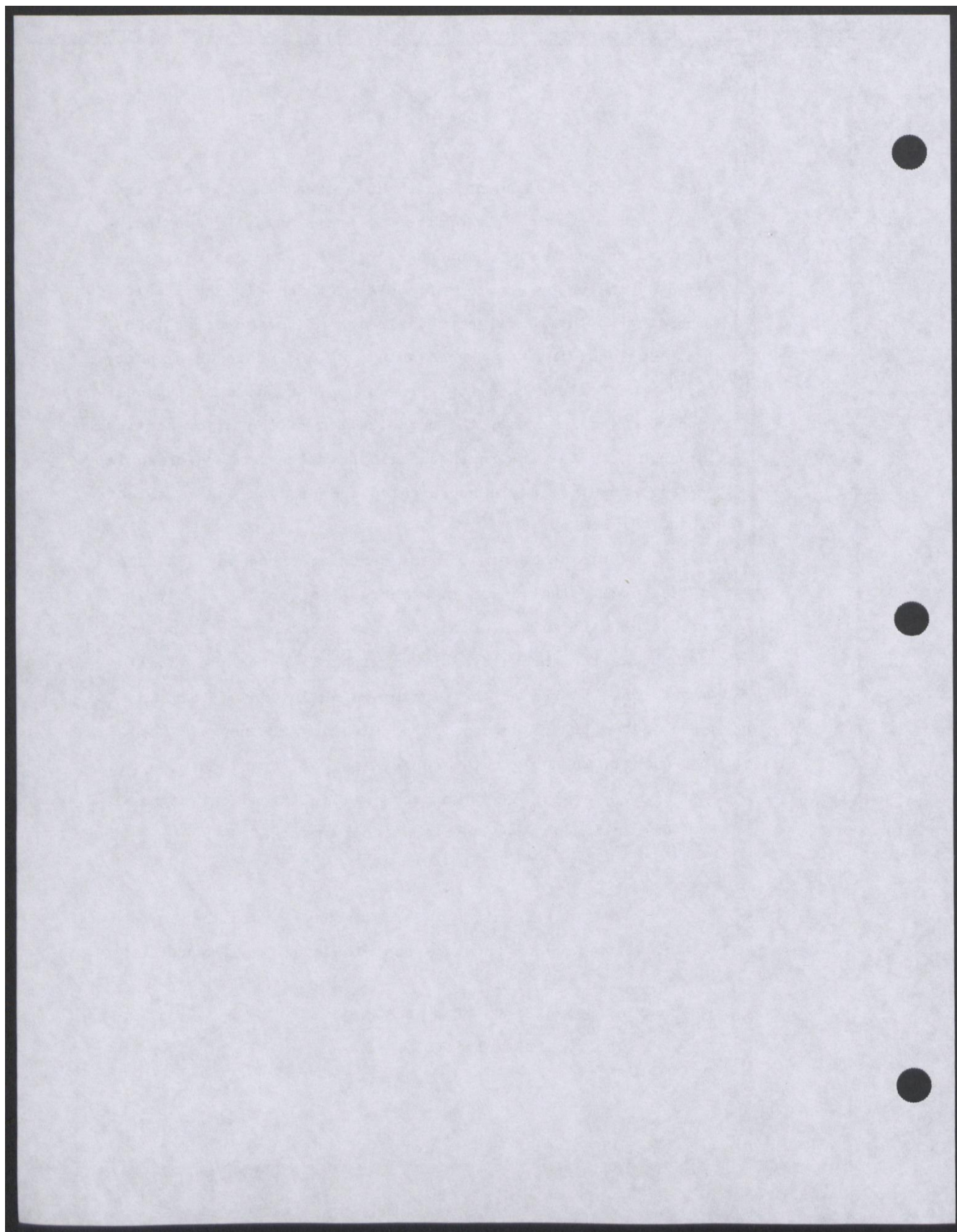
On the other hand, there never occurred any confusion of the intellectual concepts and practical politics. "The successful utilization of the bourgeois catchwords in politics presupposes the shrewd eye of a ruling class for the intellectual constitution of the stratum which intends to attain power, but will not be capable of wielding it when attained."<sup>3</sup> Consequently in England the generations of "free" opinion was most highly developed by the press and political campaigns as well as Parliament, were systematically managed.

It was different on the Continent. There the two sides of liberalism-freedom from the restrictions of soilbound life,

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol II. p. 403.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 392.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 403.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 204

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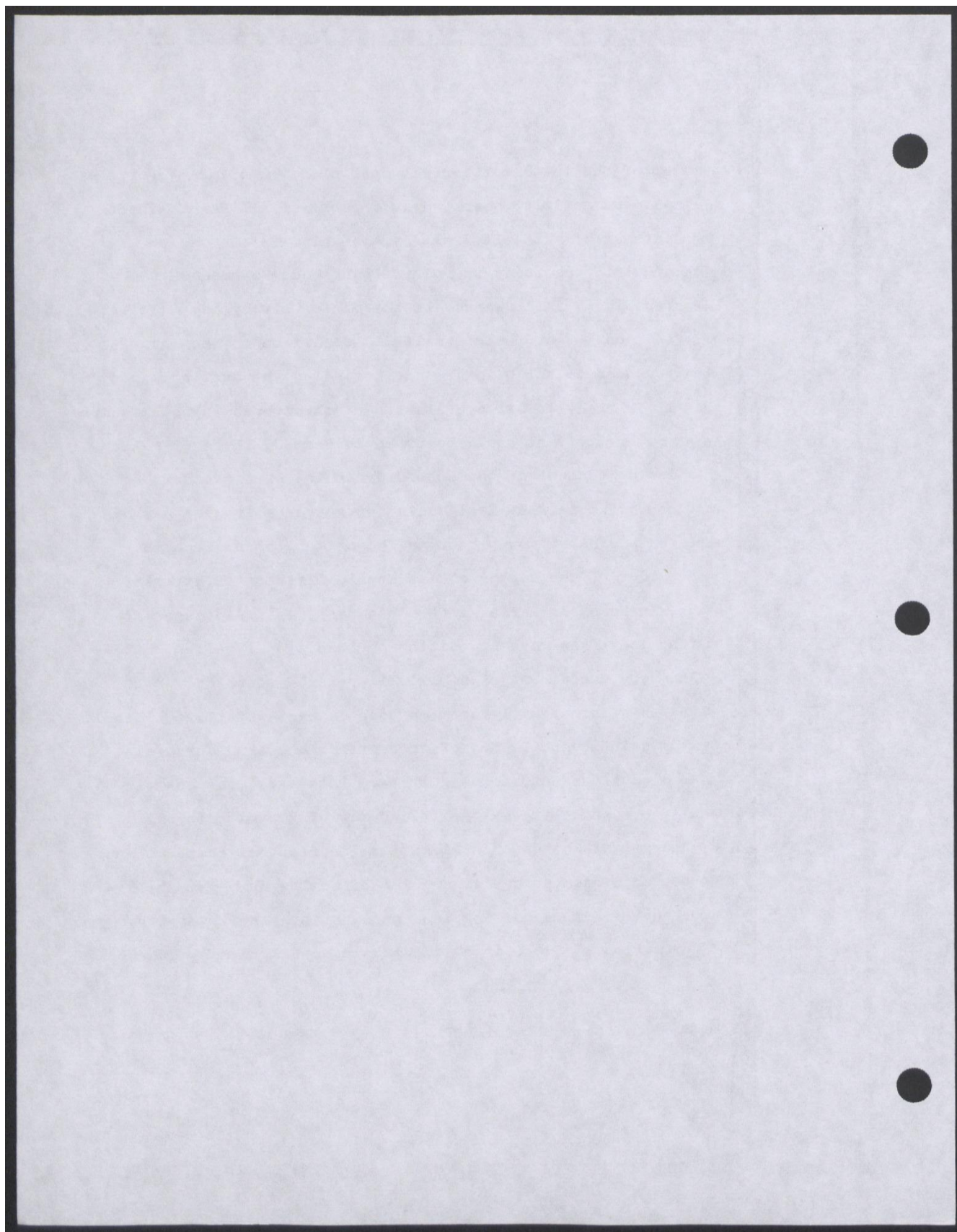
freedom of the intellect for all criticism and of money for any business activity, operated as solvent of all form. There the distrust of authority felt by the Third-Estate was so great that it was ready to resure its freedom by means of a dictatorship.<sup>1</sup> This represents the panic felt by any multitude that no longer feels itself "in condition". The waking-consciousness of which has so dominated the destiny aspect that it is ready to salvage its inner cohesiveness by submission to an authority that would never be tolerated, if legitimate.<sup>2</sup> This is the essence of the second Tyrannis, of Alexander, of Napoleon. The self-evident basis for new creativeness has disappeared and naked power becomes the criterion for success.

Out of the depths of the Megalopolis, emerges at this stage, in Rome, in Paris, a formless mass, that expresses itself no longer as mere opposition to traditional values, but is the very embodiment of nihilistic power - to which various languages attach equally contemptuous labels: Canaille, Pöepel, Mob. Its influence is out of proportion to its numbers, since it is always present, forcing its way into the forefront of events, overshadowing all political activity by its threat. The bourgeoisie henceforth risks its inner cohesiveness at any moment, both because of its smaller effective numbers, the absence of a positive guiding idea and the inferiority of its determination.<sup>3</sup> The fear of the mass causes a turn by the

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 404.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 405.
3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 400.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 206

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 207

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Third Estate at the beginning of each Civilization to a Constitutional monarchy of which the most extreme form is the Republic. Here in the Estate-state, the British model could be copied to advantage.

Two inner contradictions ever harassed the nineteenth century parliamentary state, however; the genealogical principal of such strength, that it saw in the state an embodiment of a dynasty that no longer existed and the cold intellect that only recognized the perfect form of government. This again symbolized the opposition of Time, Space, becoming and being. "While in England the parties were distinguished by their possession of different though well-tested modes of Government, on the Continent the criterion was the direction towards which the Constitution was to be changed-tradition or theory." In this contest it was forgotten that foreign policy<sup>1</sup> is the ultimate standard of inward fitness. The domestic and diplomatic service developed in opposite directions and the real victor of the dilemma was abstract money.

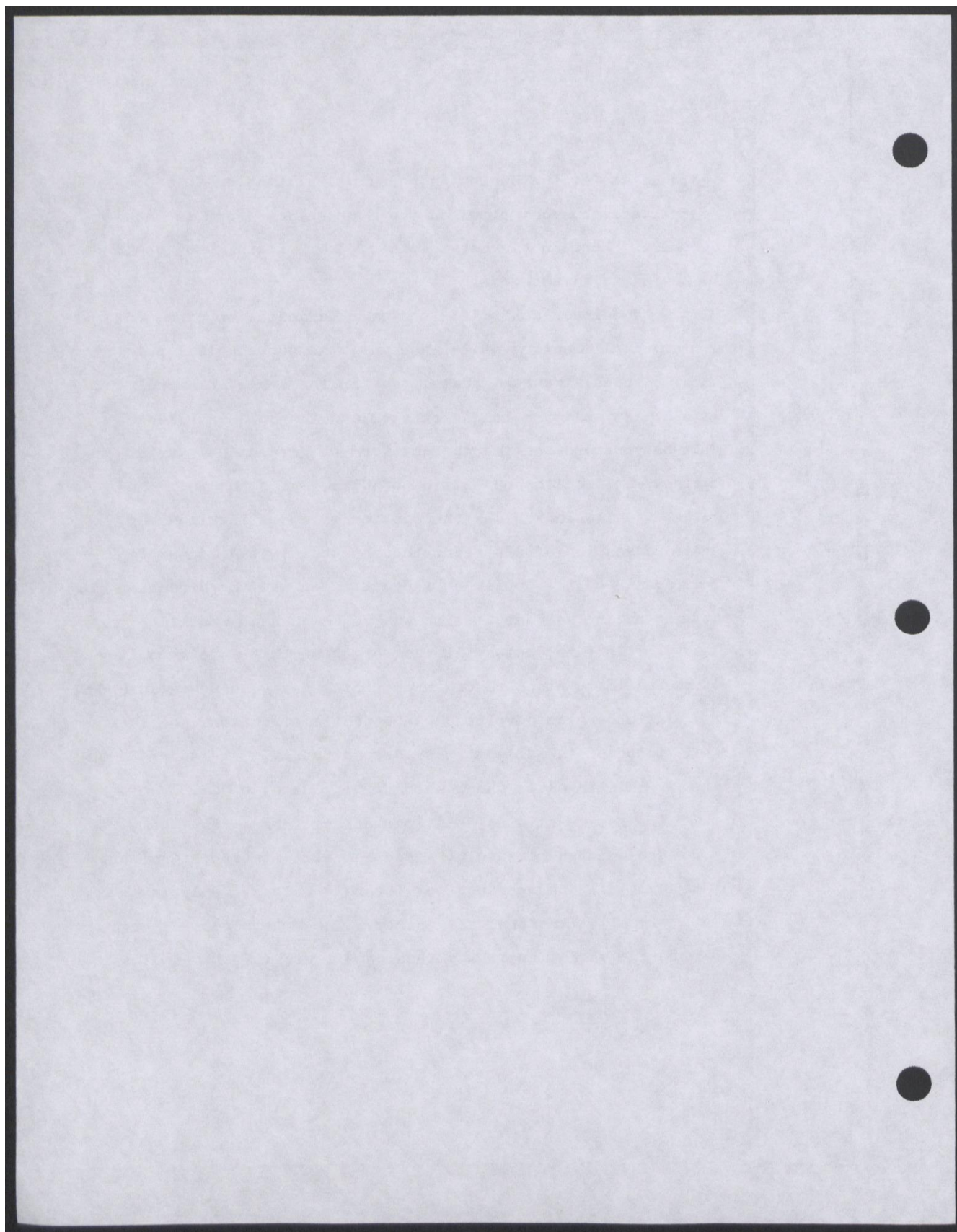
This involves the reason for the decay of democracy. The Third Estate attains political effectiveness as a party, to which one adheres because of agreement with its conceptual program, but to which one does not inwardly belong. Only the bourgeoisie is "in form" as a party. The aristocracy, though as a defensive action it may thus constitute itself and

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 414.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 208

**Image ID:** 15212997



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 209

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values and does not count and therefore merely adopts liberal methods as a mode of survival. The Marxists, also forced into bourgeois forms exhibit a continual conflict between their will, which is of necessity outside constitutionalism and is defined by Spengler as civil war<sup>1</sup> and its appearance. But the growth of party entails the eventual degeneration into interest groups, the reason for the cohesiveness of the bourgeoisie having disappeared with the elimination of the political eminence of the First Estate. For democracy to work as intended by its theorists requires the almost total absence of interested leadership. Yet a tendency that has once embodied itself in political form not only motivates parties but becomes its tool. "At first parties came into existence for the sake of the program. Then they are held on to defensively as a tool for power and booty. Finally the program is forgotten and the organization exists for its own sake."<sup>2</sup> This Spengler calls Caesarism, the dominance of formless power.

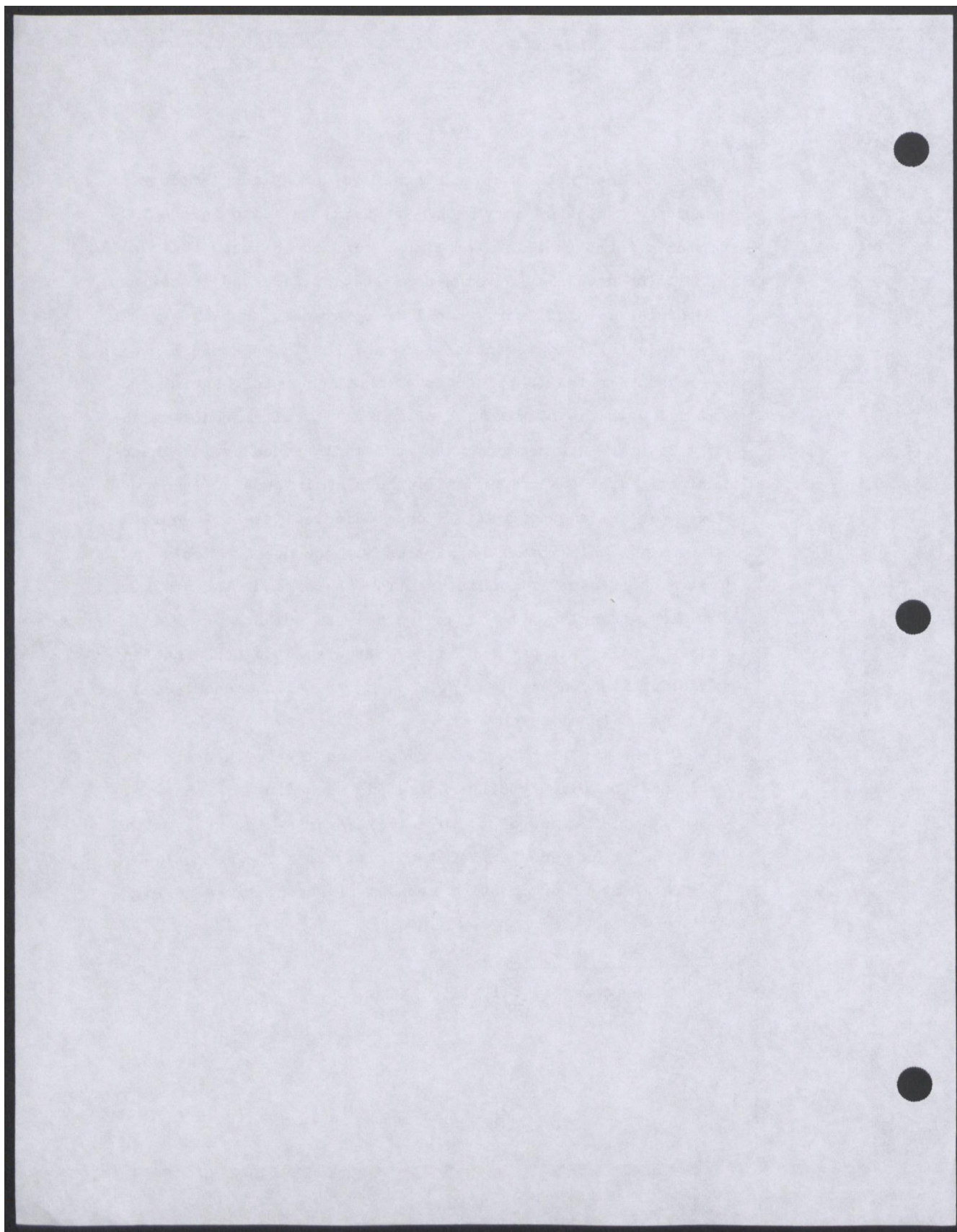
Thus the rights of the people and the influence of the people must be sharply differentiated, according to Spengler. Indeed, the influence of the electorate varies inversely with the degree of universality of the franchise. The people's fundamental right of choosing its own representatives is in practice denied, for

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 461.  
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II p. 452.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 210

**Image ID:** 15212999



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 211

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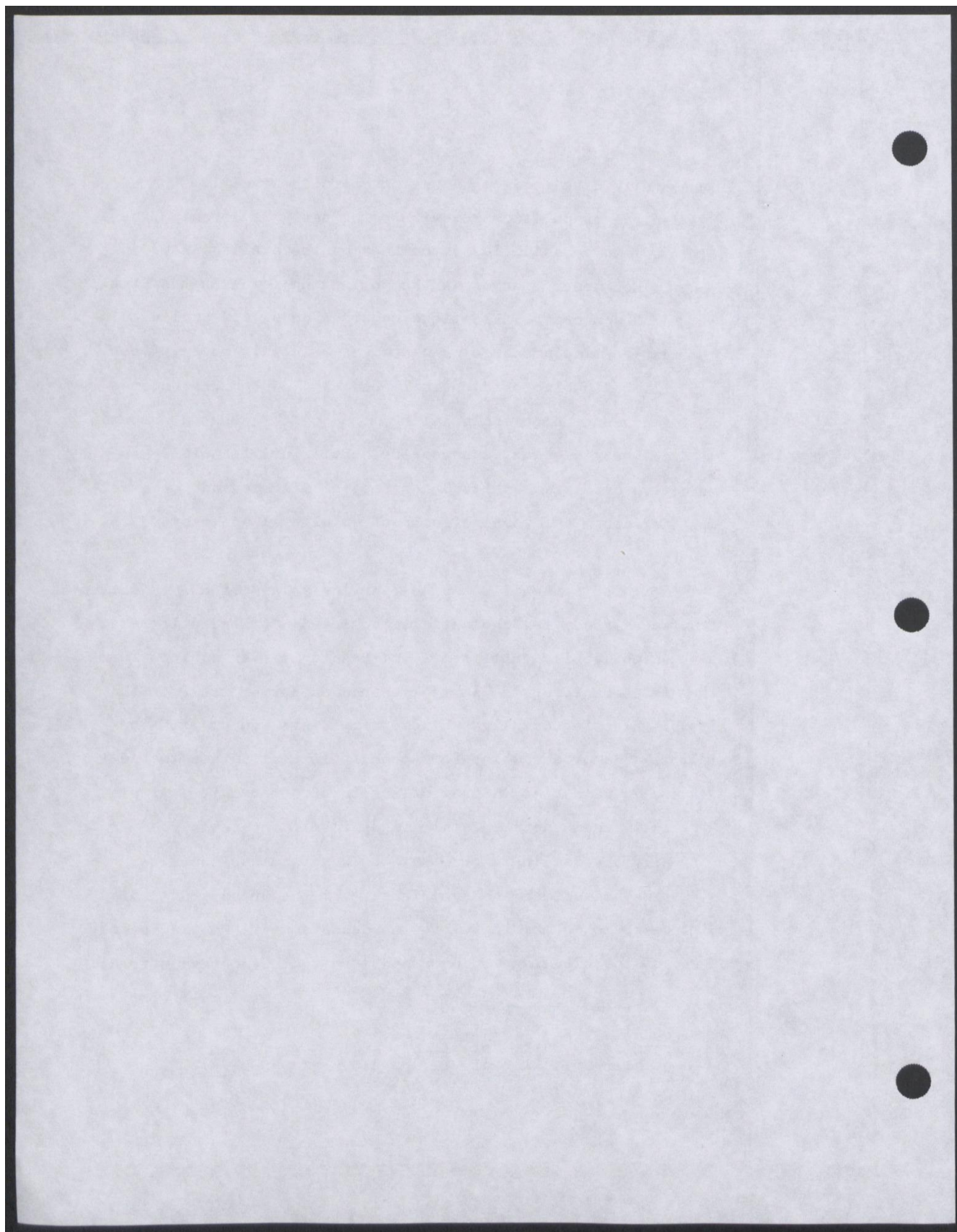
every fully developed organization recruits itself.<sup>1</sup> The effective control of politics reverts to the party leadership, the limit of its capabilities determined by the availability of money. For money emerges as the dominating force in the final stages of democracy. Elections require funds, and public opinion must be made amenable by campaigns. In this phase, free formation of public opinion is impossible. The Press becomes an independent force manipulating minds by the constant repetition of party-slogans, suppressing hostile or financially ineffective criticism by its Conspiracy of Silence and forestalling the possible adverse effects of occasional books by reviewing them.<sup>2</sup>

This is magnified by the particular dynamism of Faustian man, who already in Scholasticism achieved a willed unity that allowed no hostile criticism. This state it ever strives for. The dictatorship of the party-machines supports itself on the Press. Election campaigns become civil wars fought with the ballot. "To preserve the form even if it contradicts the advantage",<sup>3</sup> forms the theoretical basis of democracy, but this is exactly what the non-Estate finds itself incapable of doing. Gradually the feeling grows that the Constitution contains no effective guarantees and the rights that the Grandparents died for, cease to be meaningful to the descendants. People become tired of the gleaming concepts and turn to the release afforded

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 456.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 461.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 416.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 212

**Image ID:** 15213001



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 213

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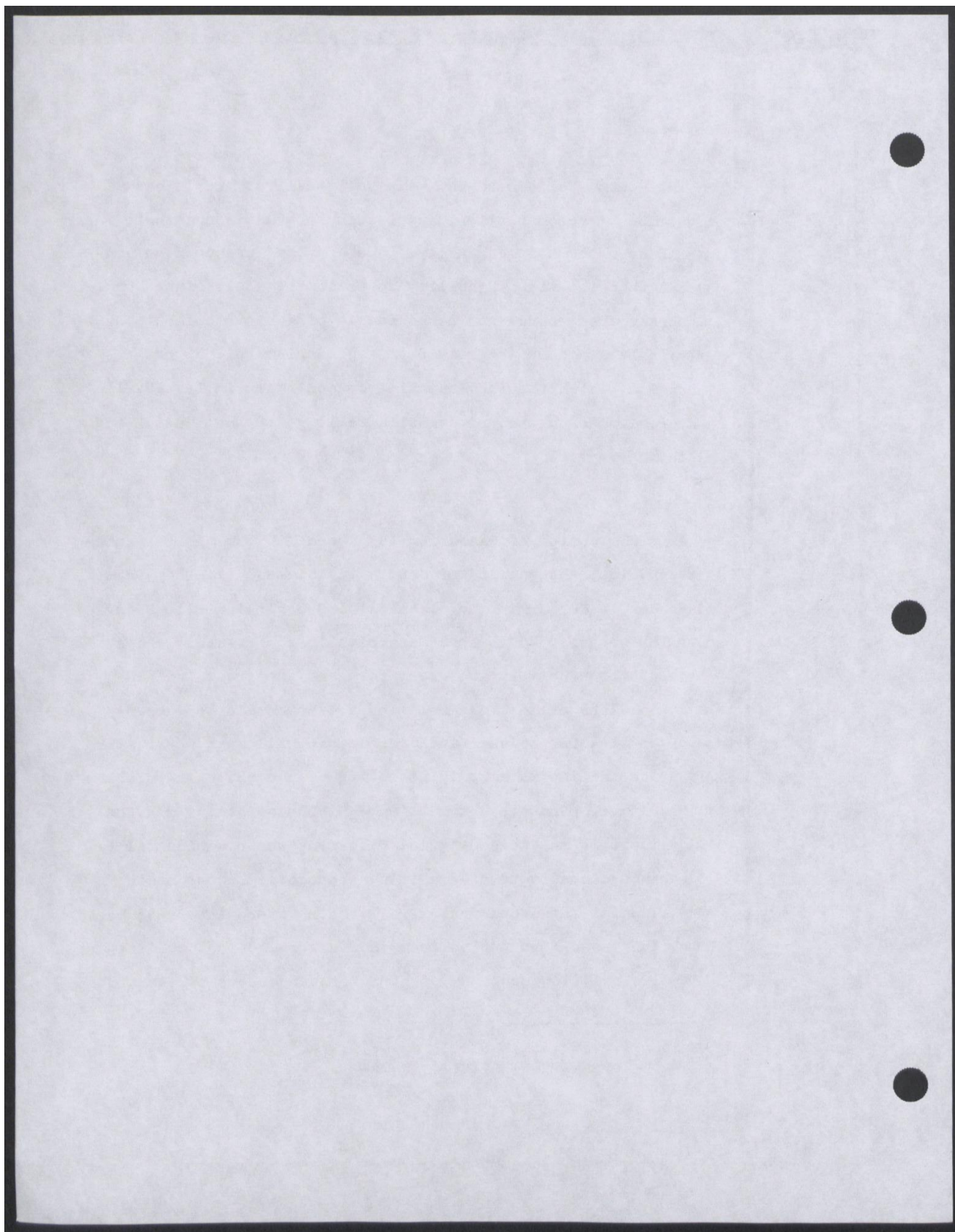
by the Second Religiousness. The political form-world has been thought to completion, and Destiny begins to reassert itself over dogmatic causality. The West has produced no political theorist with an ability to reach the souls since Marx. Democracy then represents not a summit of achievement but an inevitable stage on the road from Napoleonism to that of Caesarism, which for the last time concentrates in itself all that remains of blood, of dynastic feeling, of the idea of the State.

The period of Caesarism is preceded by an age of gigantic conflict, the "period of Contending States"<sup>1</sup> lasting from Alexander to Ceasar in the Classical and beginning with Napoleon in the West. This epoch exhibits in the crassest shape the opposition between the great form and the great individual. The loss of the felt relation to the cosmic beat opens opportunities for private individuals who will have power at any price and who as embodiments of force can shape the destiny of a Culture. The great tradition, which made genius dispensable, there is replaced by great fact-men, whose accidental appearance can elevate an era into an epoch and whose death<sup>2</sup> can cause the total collapse of all their enterprise. To be sure, the transition period from the Culture to the Civilization also had its phenomena of pure force-Napoleon or Alexander.

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 418.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 418.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 214

**Image ID:** 15213003



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 215

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But there was always the strong tradition of the Baroque at its back and the pulse of being had not yet completely died out. The Culture had bound up all forces in a strict form. But with the appearance of Napoleonism, they were released - and in time Nature broke forth.<sup>1</sup> "Cabinet diplomacy had been conducted within definite rules. The wars of the 18th century consisted of the maneuvers of small armies under well-understood conditions. But the era preceding Caesarism replaces the absolute state with a battling society of states. This is the dawn of the great individual beginning in the Classical with Hannibal and in the West with the World War.

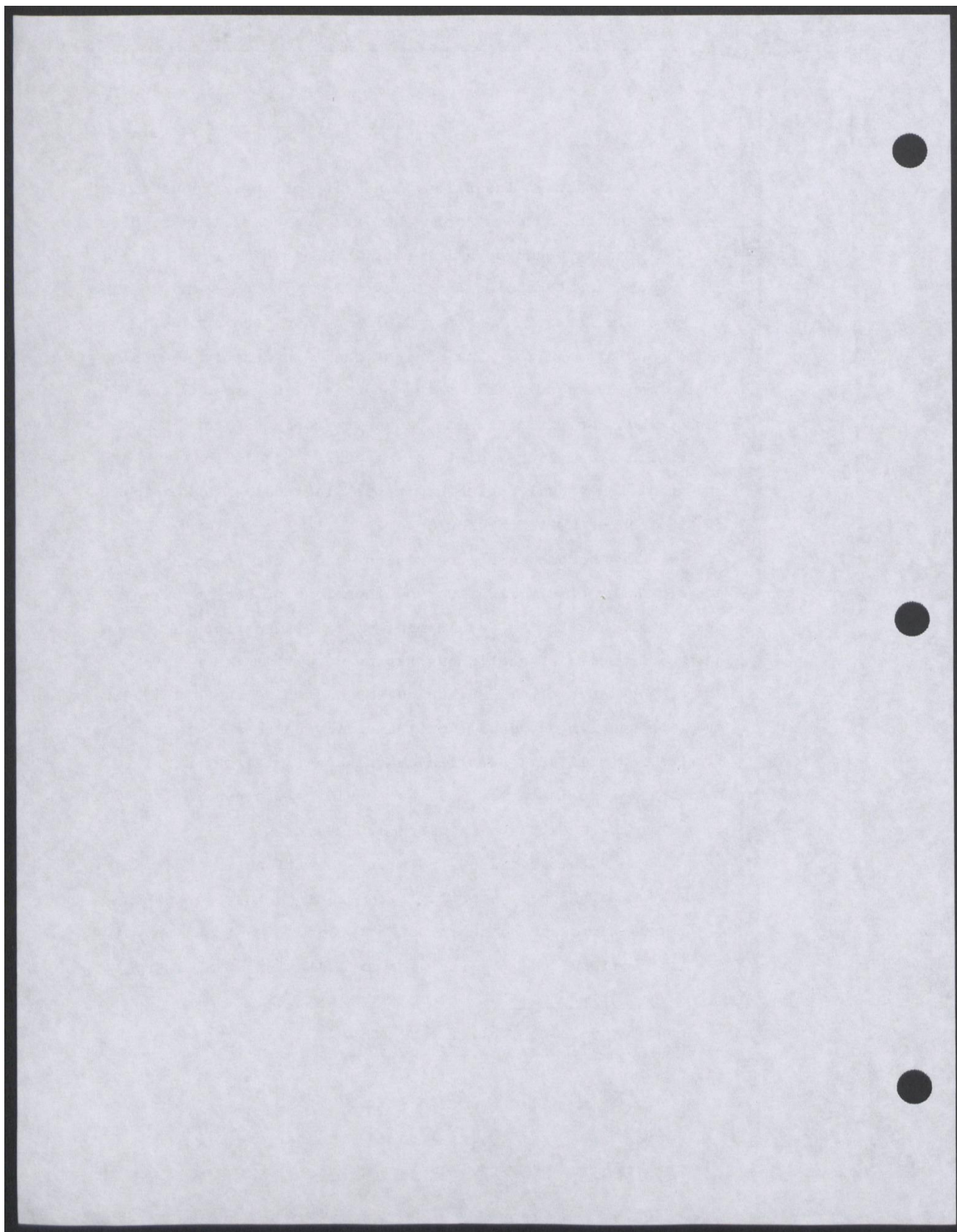
Wars become ever more violent and uncompromising. Until the beginning of civilization the technique of War had always been subsidiary to the development of craftsmanship.<sup>2</sup> But now the requirements of continuous war or potential war require the subservience of all mechanical means to instruments of destruction and largely condition technical progress by its assumed fitness for military operations. Universal military service, mass-charges dominate battles that would to contemporaries of Frederick the Great have appeared madness.

The ruthlessness of the peace-conditions matches the expenditure of force. Starting with Napoleon the conventions of 18th century warfare began to be violated. Only the physical restrictions tend to limit the exploitation of military

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 418.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 420.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 216

**Image ID:** 15213005



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 217

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successes.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Versailles deliberately avoided final conditions of peace, enabling the victors to modify their demands with the changing-situation.<sup>2</sup>

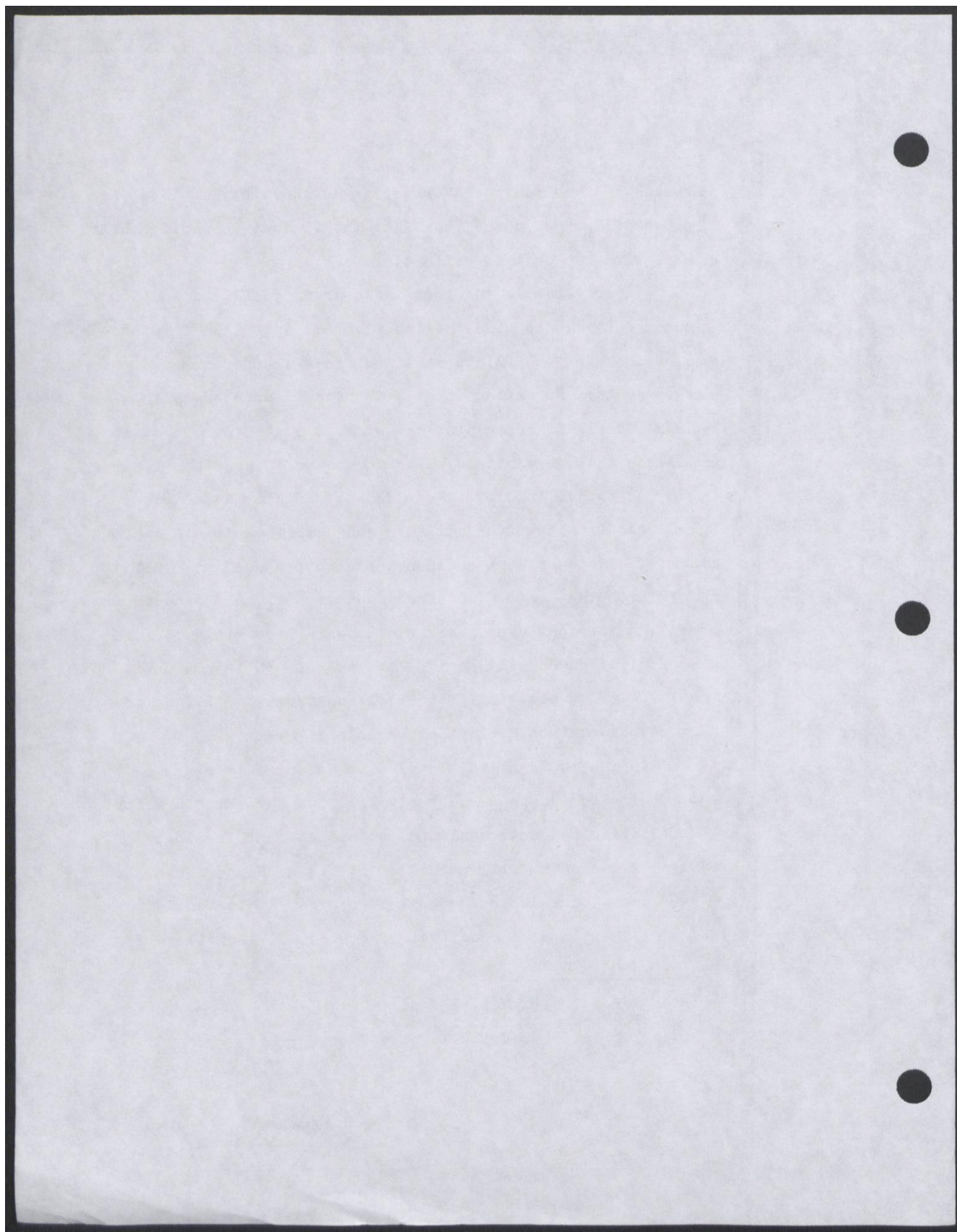
Imperialism is the inevitable product of Civilization an outward thrust to hide the inner void. After the formlessness of the early conflicts, the most self-assured power, emerges as the dominating force. The vacuum created by the collapse of all inner meaning has such strength that it does not matter whether a people wills to assume this role. It is seized and pushed into it. Rome did not conquer its Empire, it condensed itself into that form and despite Scipio's awareness of the dangers Rome could not escape its destiny. So it will be with the West. The power centers will become ever fewer, the tensions ever greater, the wars more violent. The great foci of power will decide the fate of continents until Caesarism in its political form will supervene and life gradually slip back into biological periods.

In the souls of the people, arises at this stage a great desire for peace. Every civilization knows the cry for reconciliation and universal understanding. But the logic of the age of Caesarism will not allow it. "The Hague Conference of 1907 was a prelude to the World War; the Washington Conference of 1922 will have been that of others."<sup>3</sup> A civilization

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 422.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 422.
  3. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 430.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 218

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 219

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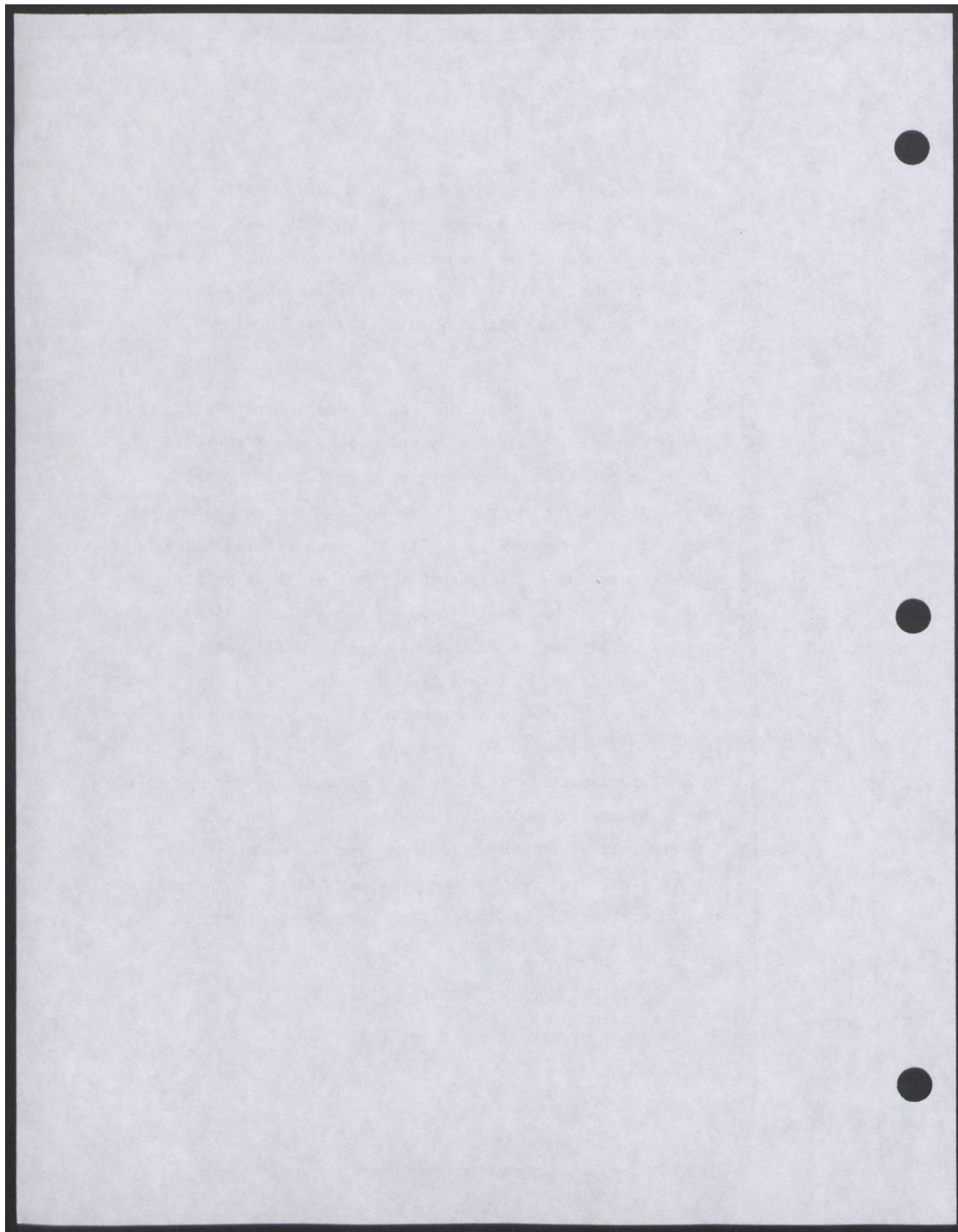
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does not permit a people to choose its mode of life, judging it by its fitness for the struggle. In this task whatever remains of old traditions, representing the organic factors, such as the U.S. constitution, acquires tremendous force and can bring about historical results of great magnitude.<sup>1</sup>

Money at the beginning of this period permeated public life. Economics, the activity which belongs to the spindle-side of being, its mere preserving aspects, is the primary mode of thought in the young Cosmopolis. Ethics becomes social-engineering. "Property is theft" representing the ultra-materialistic conception of the thought: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul."<sup>2</sup> But money is merely a form of thought, ordering all activity with reference to itself. Like all problems of the Culture it will reach a state of absolute inner finishedness, no matter how powerful its present manifestations. The dynamic economics of the Faustian Culture, symbolized by double-entry bookkeeping, a pure spatial analysis of an economic condition and in which the true values are production and work not as mistakenly<sup>3</sup> assumed gold,<sup>4</sup> has reached the limit of its inner possibilities. Just as at the time of Diocletian, thinking in terms of money

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 430.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 344.
3. Written in 1918.
4. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 493.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 220  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 221

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will gradually cease and the force of law, the power aspect<sup>1</sup> of becoming triumph over the mere acquisitive side.

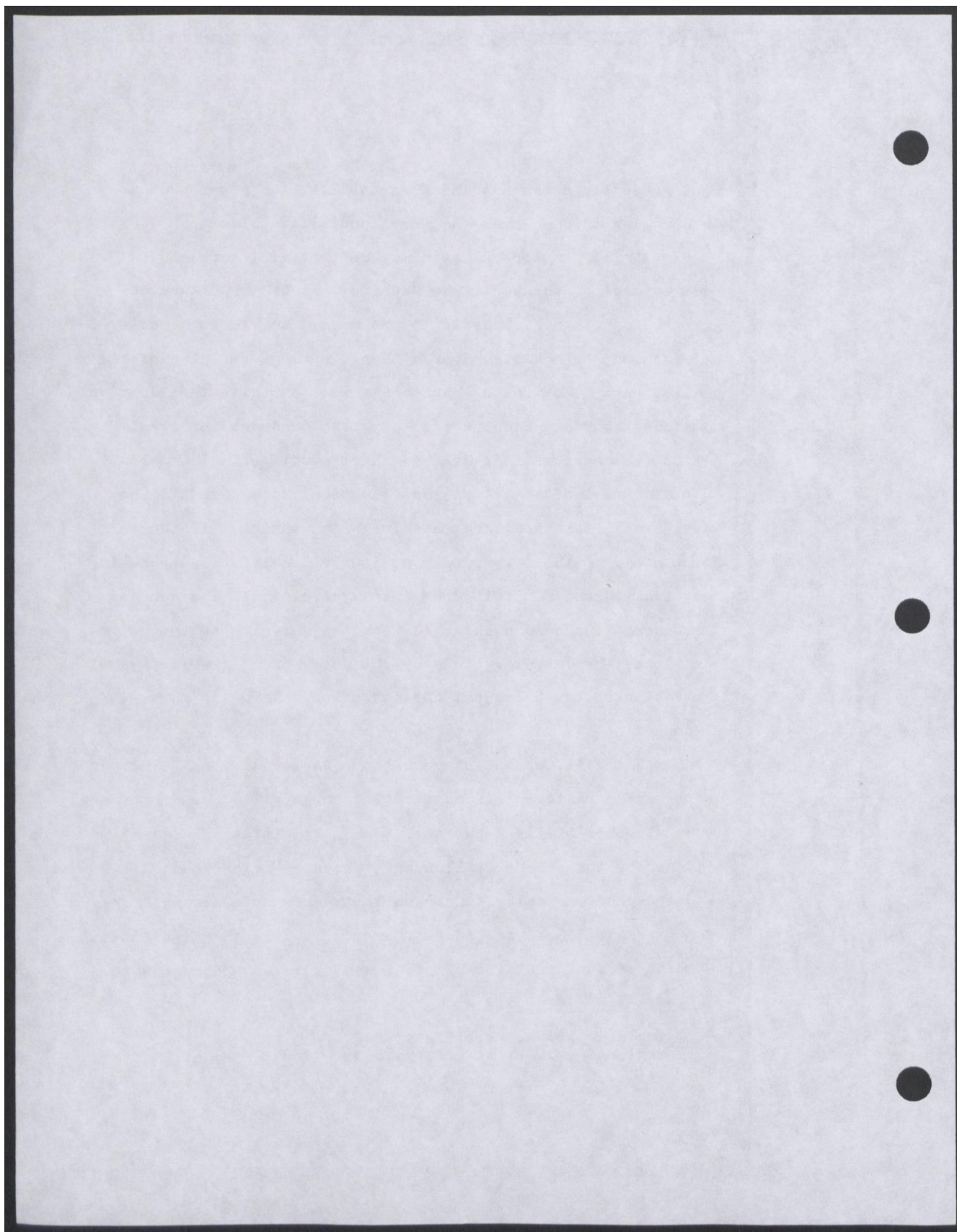
This, Spengler believes, may be the fate, too, of that prime-symbol of the West, the Machine. No other Culture has constructed its relationship to the macrocosm, in such masterful fashion, or achieved such a thoroughgoing revision of its environment. The working-hypothesis ever exhibits the Faustian attitude towards the universe. Work and deed are the great ethical concepts of this Culture, Kant's categorical imperative a command of activity. But technical knowledge will be of no avail, to a soul that has lost its meaning. If the best young minds of the future will no longer see life's purpose in practical pursuit and withdraw into mysticism, if the succeeding generations become obsessed with the Satanism of their creations, then nothing can stop the decay of this prime symbol, a creation of the intellect and not of pure labor as Marx<sup>2</sup> supposed.

This will be the stage of pure Caesarism, the formless force, which whatever its outward trappings will depend on the personal power of its possessor. The huge citizen-militia is replaced by the chief's followings, private armies whose destinies depend on their leaders as in the time of Caesar, Pompey and Octavian. The real focus of events becomes the Megalopolis in which wars of infinite bloodiness because of their private

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 196.
  2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 344

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 222

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 223

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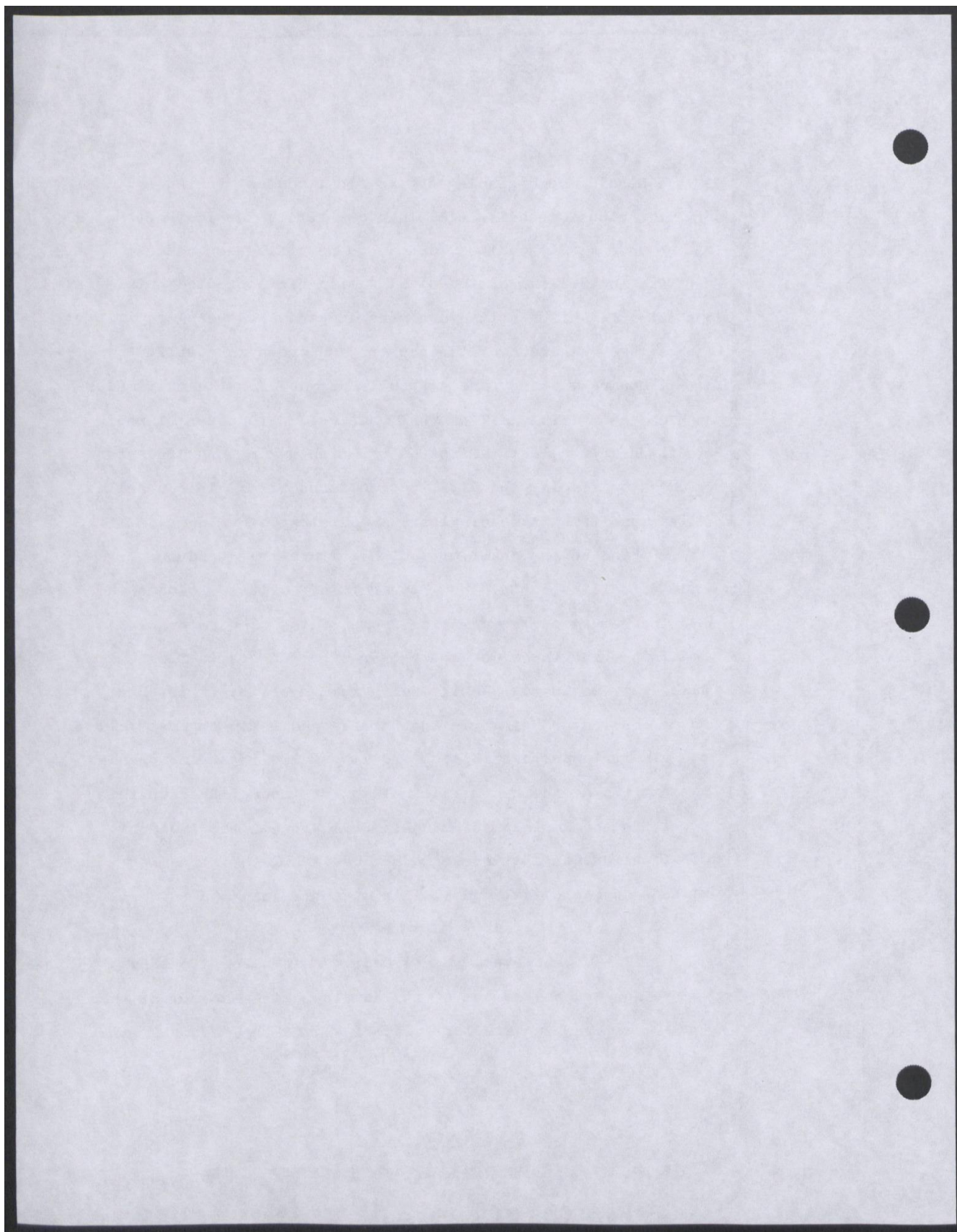
nature herald the beginning of the final contest for power. The victorious Caesarism will then constitute the last attempt by the powers of the blood, doomed to petrification because the fire in the soul of the Civilization has long died out. Its outward manifestations are mere appearance. People's rights take the place of the scepter and crown in constitutional monarchy. They are carefully paraded for the multitudes to hide their total lack of real meaning. With power without tradition as its last manifestation, with waking-consciousness defeated by itself, the Civilization turns itself into a fellah state where time is meaningless, and history at an end:

"And so the drama of a high culture-that wondrous world of deities, arts, thoughts, battles, cities - closes with the return of the pristine facts of the blood eternal that is one and the same as the ever-circling cosmic flow. The bright imaginative Waking-Being submerges itself into the silent service of Being, as the Chinese and Roman empires tell us. Time triumphs over Space, and it is Time whose inexorable movement embeds the ephemeral incident of the Culture, on this planet, in the incident of man - a form wherein the incident life flows on for a time, while behind it all the streaming horizons of geological and stellar histories pile up in the light-world of our eyes.

"For us, however, whom a Destiny has placed in this Culture and at this moment of its development - the moment when money is celebrating its last victories, and the Caesarism that

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 224

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is to succeed approaches with quiet, firm step - our direction, willed and obligatory at once, is set for us within narrow limits, and on any other terms life is not worth the living. We have not the freedom to reach to this or to that, but the freedom to do the necessary or to do nothing. And a task that historic necessity has set will be accomplished with the individual or against him."<sup>1</sup>

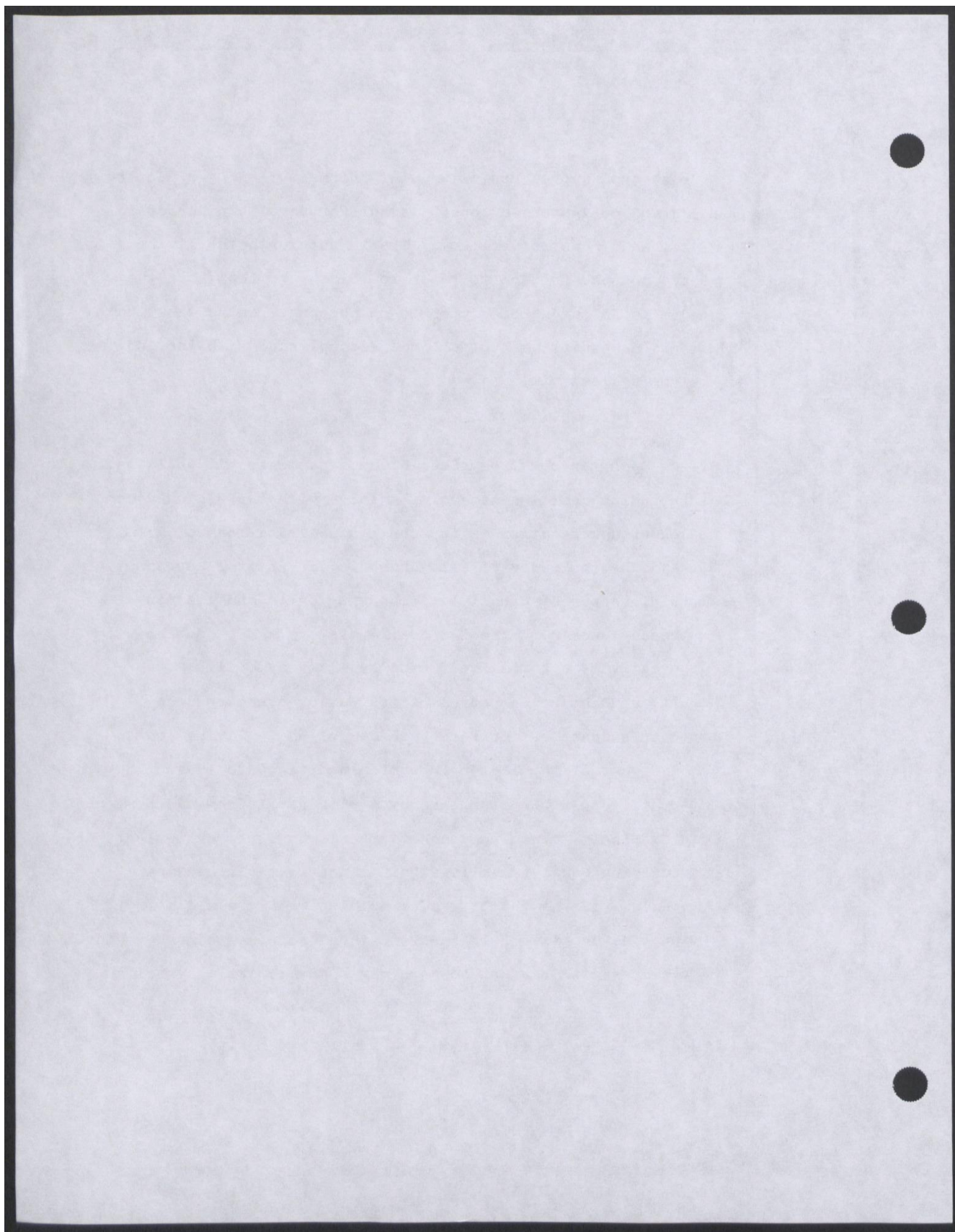
Spengler's metaphysical dilemma permeates his political theory, which contains many similarities with the Platonic conception of degeneration as the consequence of a loss of tradition and the dominance of selfishness. The Estates represent the quintessence of creativity embodying breed and training and thereby become the foci of world-history. Yet just how is this creativity accomplished? The Nobility symbolizes pure becoming and the Priesthood typifies waking-consciousness. Since the essence of the former is comprised in living a destiny and that of the latter in confining itself to the world as eternally possible expressed by a withdrawal from history, it is difficult to see what constitutes Spengler's criterion for ascribing equal symbolic significance to their appearance as estates. If the Nobility does nothing but live a destiny it cannot be creative. If the Priesthood represents mere waking-consciousness it does not possess any characteristic symbolism.

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1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 507.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 226

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Again, if religion is a construction of waking-consciousness one should expect its early manifestations to be hesitant, unsure of themselves, attaining ever greater mastery of form with the emancipation of the waking-consciousness in the development of the Culture. In fact, exactly the opposite is true in Spengler's scheme. The period of greatest religious creative force occurs at the beginning of the Culture and Caesarism finds religion just as all other problemation devoid of any symbolic significance.

The nobility as the prime estate appears unable by itself to achieve that inner purposiveness which Spengler considers the outstanding characteristic of the State. Indeed the State comes into existence only over its opposition. If the symbolism of the state finds its expression in an idea, which transcends mere becoming, it seems evident that this idea is a function of waking-consciousness not of an immanent destiny. Moreover, as Spengler points out, the Magian cultures articulate themselves almost exclusively through the symbolism of a Priesthood, with the nobility playing a subsidiary role.

The conclusion appears again, despite many striking insights, that the strict separation of becoming and being into a postulate of alternatives has no standing in reality. Both are merely tendencies, the relative predominance of which, characterizes modes of world-experience.

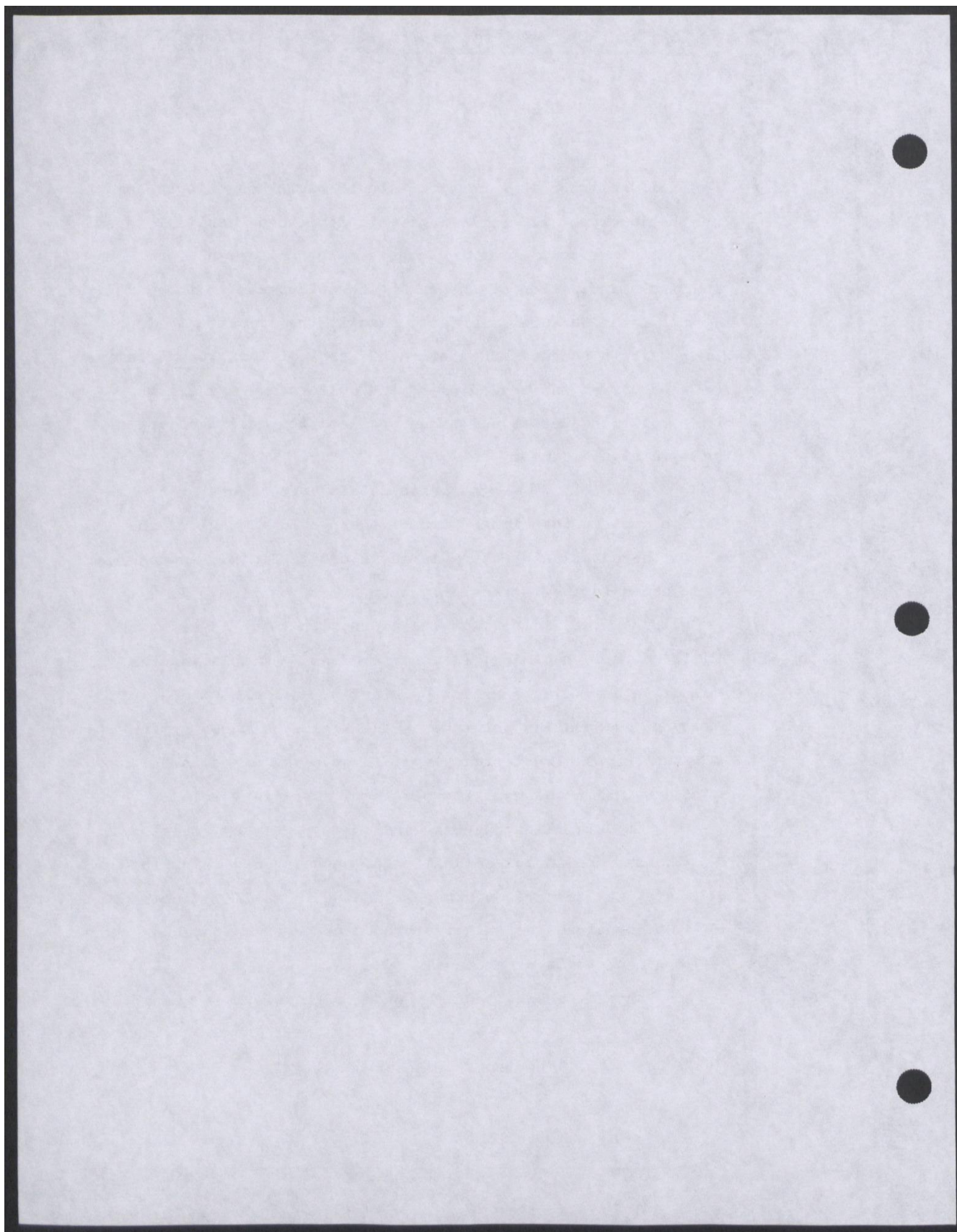
Purposiveness without an organic framework is meaningless.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See post Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 228

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 229

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Pure existence describes an animal state. All creativity requires waking-consciousness, but effective leadership will take into account the unconscious factors of motivation. It must be admitted that in many respects Spengler acknowledges this. In the chapter on mathematics, <sup>1</sup> he explicitly affirms the inter-relationship. The confrontation of Pilate and Christ, of profound and compelling beauty, contains a poetic implication not only of the opposition but also the connection of these aspects of life. But ever the temptation to shock and the approach to history as a machine perpetually reproducing new manifestations of power, which man is impotent to influence, gains the upper hand and leads to the elaboration of the opposition between Time and Space, Destiny and Causality, the World-as-History and the World-as-Nature.

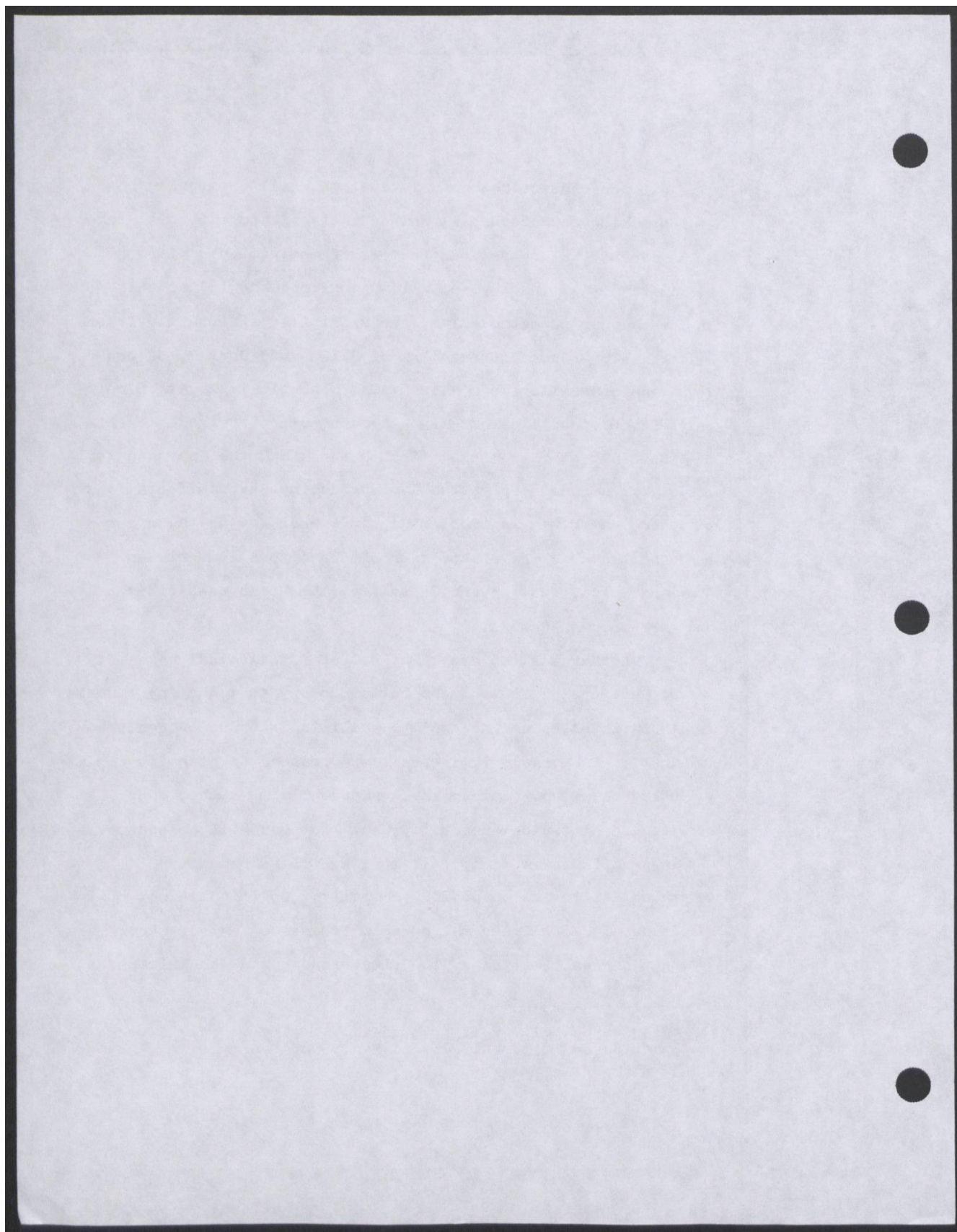
"Luther was the creation, not of intellectual necessity <sup>2</sup> but of destiny." It would be better to say that destiny embodies itself in intellectual necessity. Political conduct reveals not just an inexorable immanence but a process of becoming consciously evaluated. Luther was consequently more than the creation of historical necessity, but the shaper of a tendency, the inspiration of a dimly felt longing. Life reveals not merely activity, but purposeful activity. Politics is not a simple problem of living the organic immanence, but of recognizing the possibilities of the situation. This recognition,

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 54.

2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. II. p. 295.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 230

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 231

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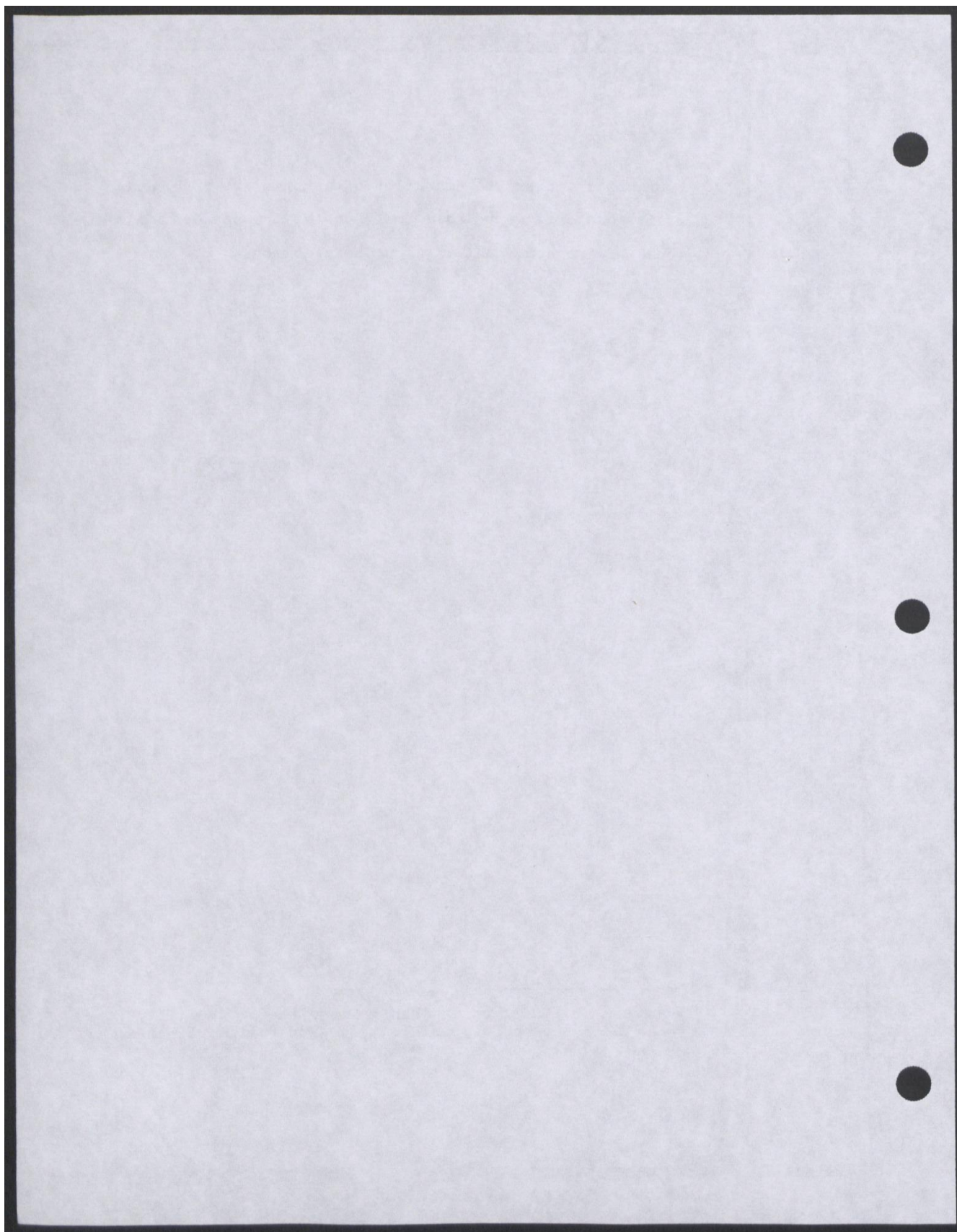
however, constitutes the emanation of a normative framework. Necessity can only serve as a foil for the transcendental experience of freedom,<sup>1</sup> not as a guide to action.

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1. See post Ch. "History and Man's Experience of Morality". Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility". For full development of this idea.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 232

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 233

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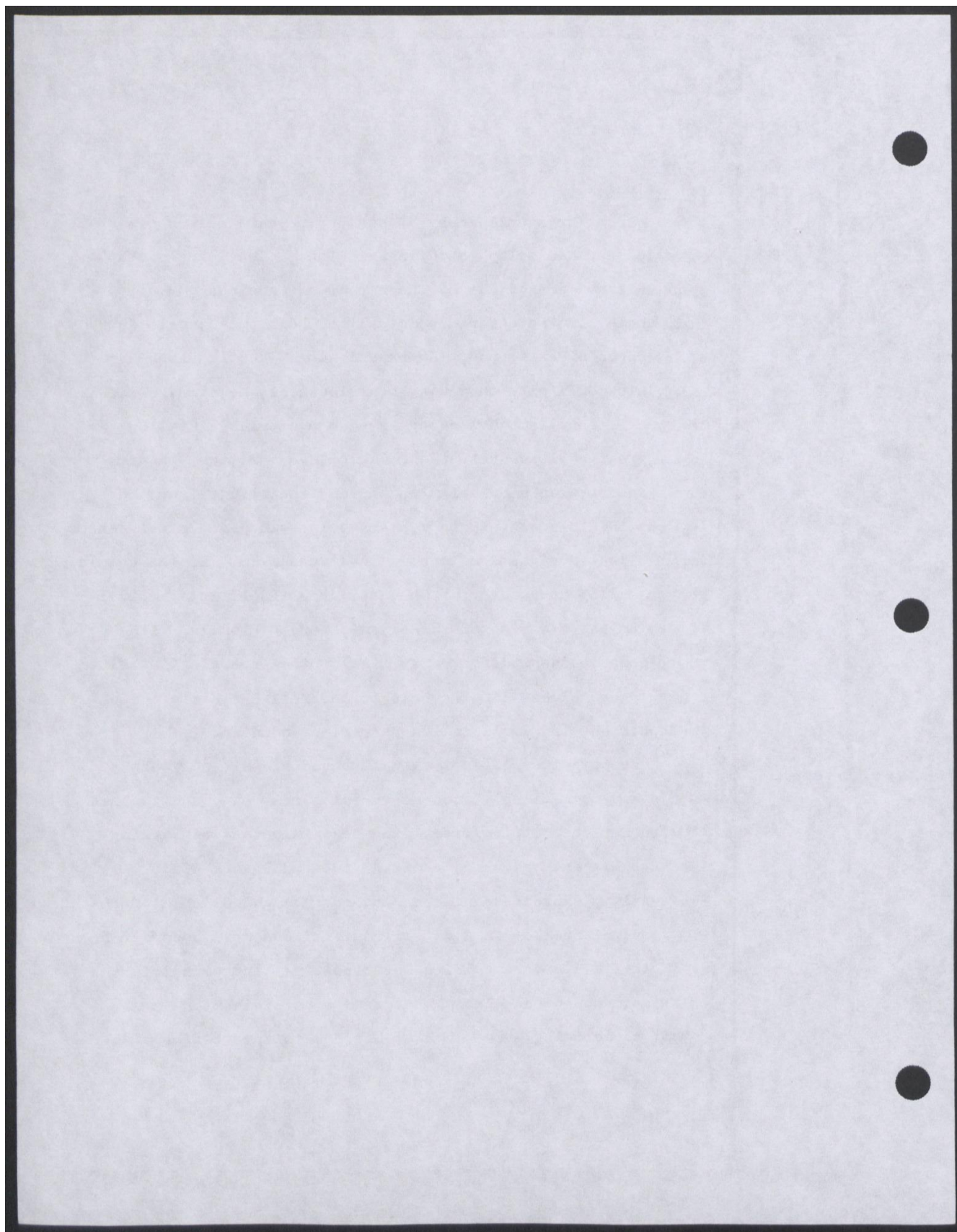
### Conclusions

Spengler's philosophy of history reveals all the implications of his metaphysical assumptions. The forms of the great Cultures emerge out of the stream of nameless humanity, their whole life an effort to actualize their immanence. The directedness of existence, the experience of destiny, soon come into conflict with waking-consciousness, however. Stifled by a rationalism that recognizes no mysteries, ideation in the great style ceases. In religion, in politics, in art, formlessness rules a humanity which can find refuge from the tensions in its soul only in mystery cults, in panem et circenses and in silent resignation to political Caesarism. As the cosmic beat gradually decreases the Culture turns itself into a Civilization amidst a series of cataclysmic wars. Finally, with waking-consciousness defeated by itself, the powers of the blood reassert themselves, life reverts to the fellah state of creative impotence, the Civilization petrifies and dies.

Despite the poetic imaginativeness of this philosophy and its many startlingly accurate predictions, our analysis has revealed serious difficulties. The opposition between waking-consciousness and becoming, between Time and Space, History and Causality expresses, but does not resolve, the dilemma of the experience of freedom in a determined environment. Spengler believes that history reveals an inexorable destiny, its triumphs the consequence of an almost unconscious participation in the process of becoming. But much of his data disproves these

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 234

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contentions. If each culture constructs its own image of the world and spends its existence in an attempt to actualize it, then the biological sequence of generations attains symbolism only through an inward experience. But since experiences are unique and necessity can govern only the general, we find that the specificity of each culture is a function of freedom, not a blindly-working organic immanence. Destiny requires waking-consciousness to actualize its possibilities.

On the other hand, if the life of each culture represents an effort to actualize its prime-symbol, one would expect the historical development of the culture to vary as much as their symbolism. Spengler, however, has postulated an identical political institutionalization at comparable stages of existence. This leads to the conclusion, that the cultures may not represent as self-contained organisms as Spengler suggests. The very possibility of making an analysis of another Culture's soul indicates, moreover, a degree of inner relationship compounded by the fact that Spengler seriously examines only the Faustian,<sup>1</sup> Apollinian and Magian Cultures.

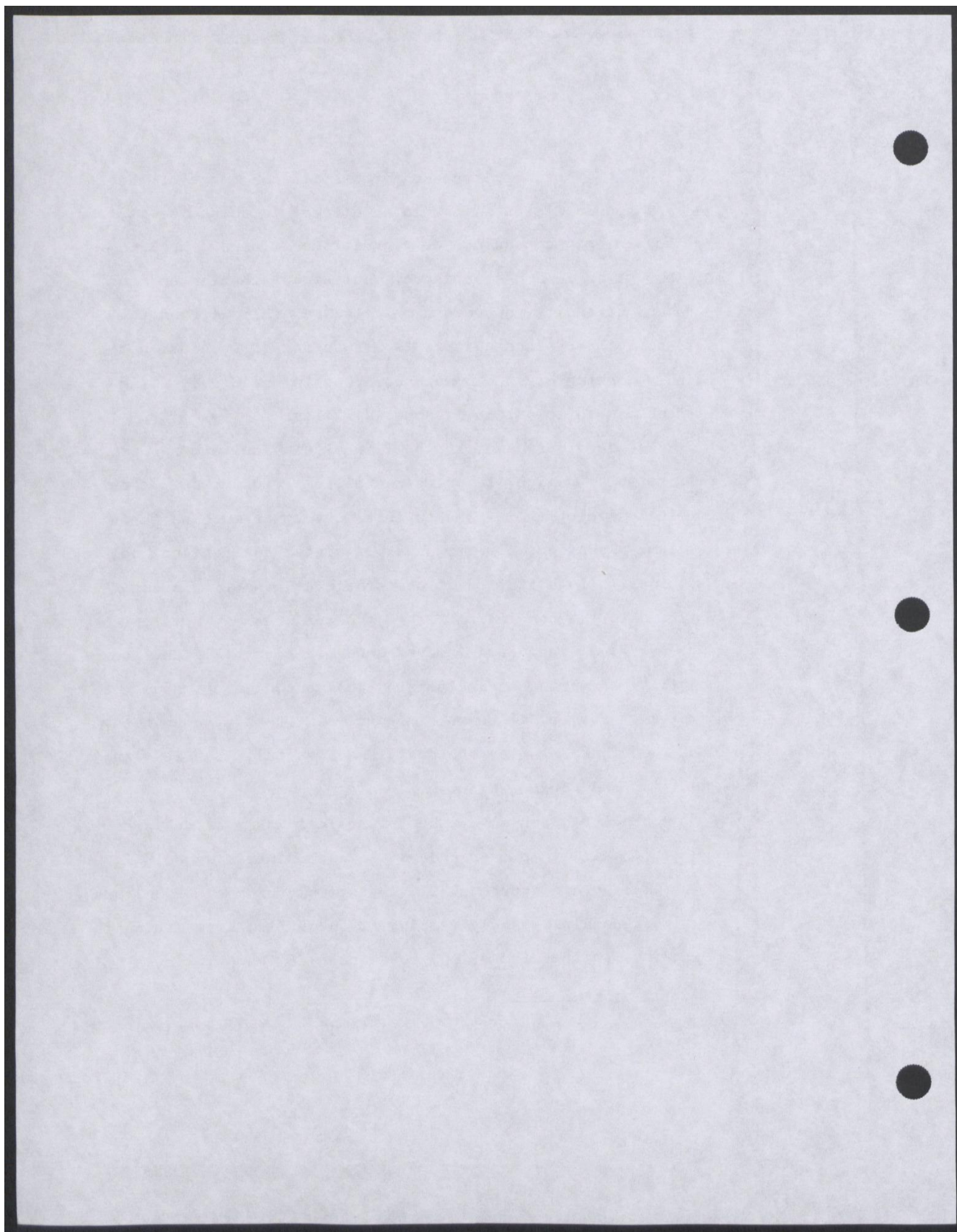
Spengler's denial of the interrelationship of Cultures and their inability to ever understand each other's symbols is thus refuted by his approach. If the symbols of another Culture must always remain inwardly remote, it is difficult to see what governs the continuation of any ideation. If, however, most

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1. For more complete analysis see ante discussion at end of previous section.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 236

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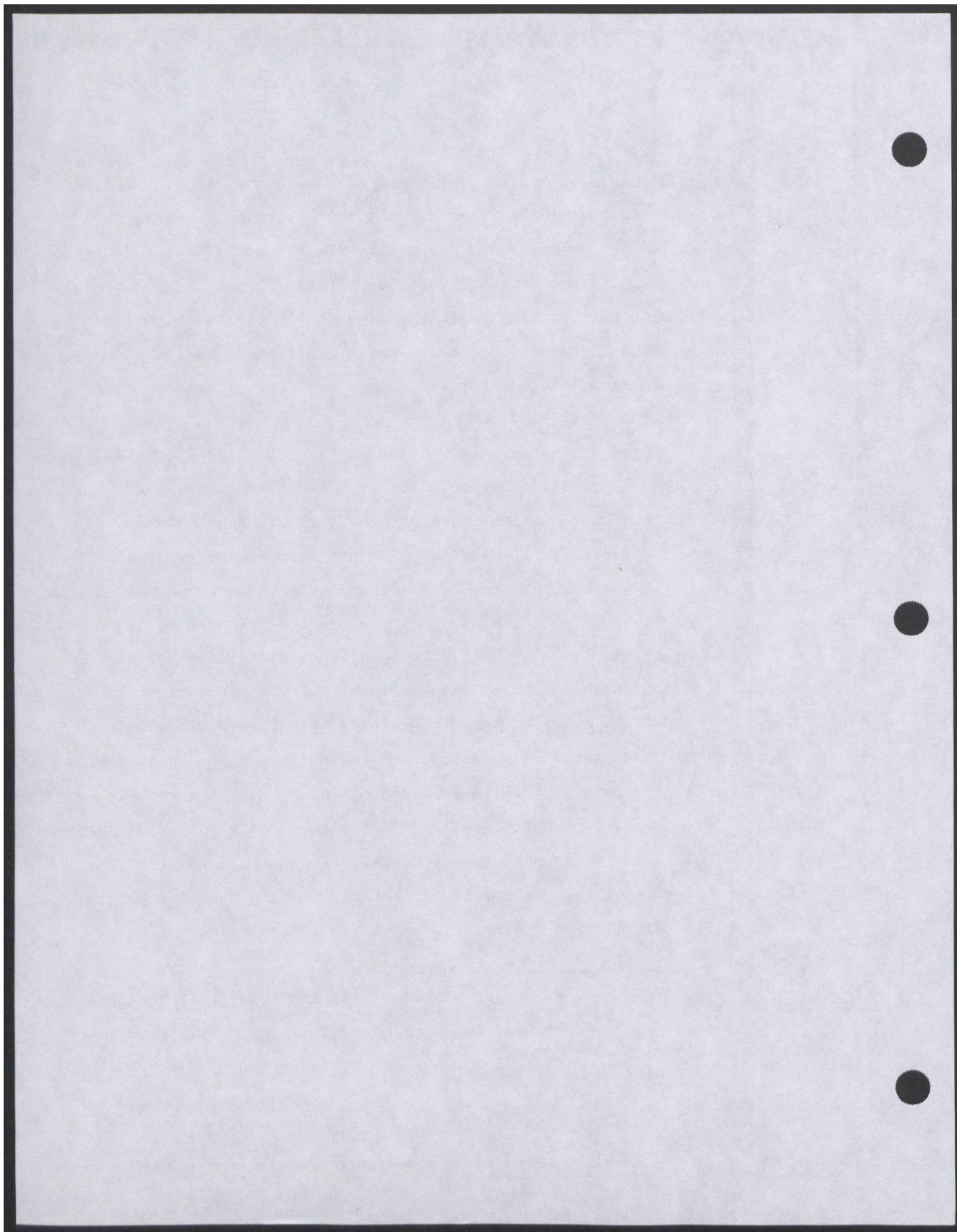
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Cultures begin by taking over foreign symbols then it can hardly be asserted that these forms did not condition their users. Though Christianity may have been adapted to fit the needs of the Faustian soul, the whole history of the West was permeated by the particular spirituality of this well-organized institution, with its heritage of the Greeco-Roman tradition. The infusion of new meaning into old forms involves a different process than spontaneous creativity.

Spengler's political theory contains similar inconsistencies. It proved impossible to reconcile the metaphysical postulate of alternative modes of behavior with a political symbolism expressed in Estates. The nobility as the representative of an inexorable destiny appears to have no scope for creativity and the Priesthood, as the exponent of pure waking-consciousness lacks symbolism.<sup>1</sup> Spengler's difficulty derives from the resolution of tendencies whose relative predominance characterizes modes of world-experience into incompatible alternatives. He forgot that the World-as-History and the World-as-Nature are merely symbolic representations of possible apprehensions of reality, not objective attributes of existence. History and Causality represent types of analysis concerned respectively with noumenal and phenomenal occurrences.<sup>2</sup> This does not prove their opposition, however. It merely indicates levels of

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1. These arguments are presented at considerably greater length at the end of the respective chapters.
  2. See post Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality for Complete analysis.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 238  
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meaning for events which can be understood only as a unity, as destiny purposively evaluated, as history consciously lived.

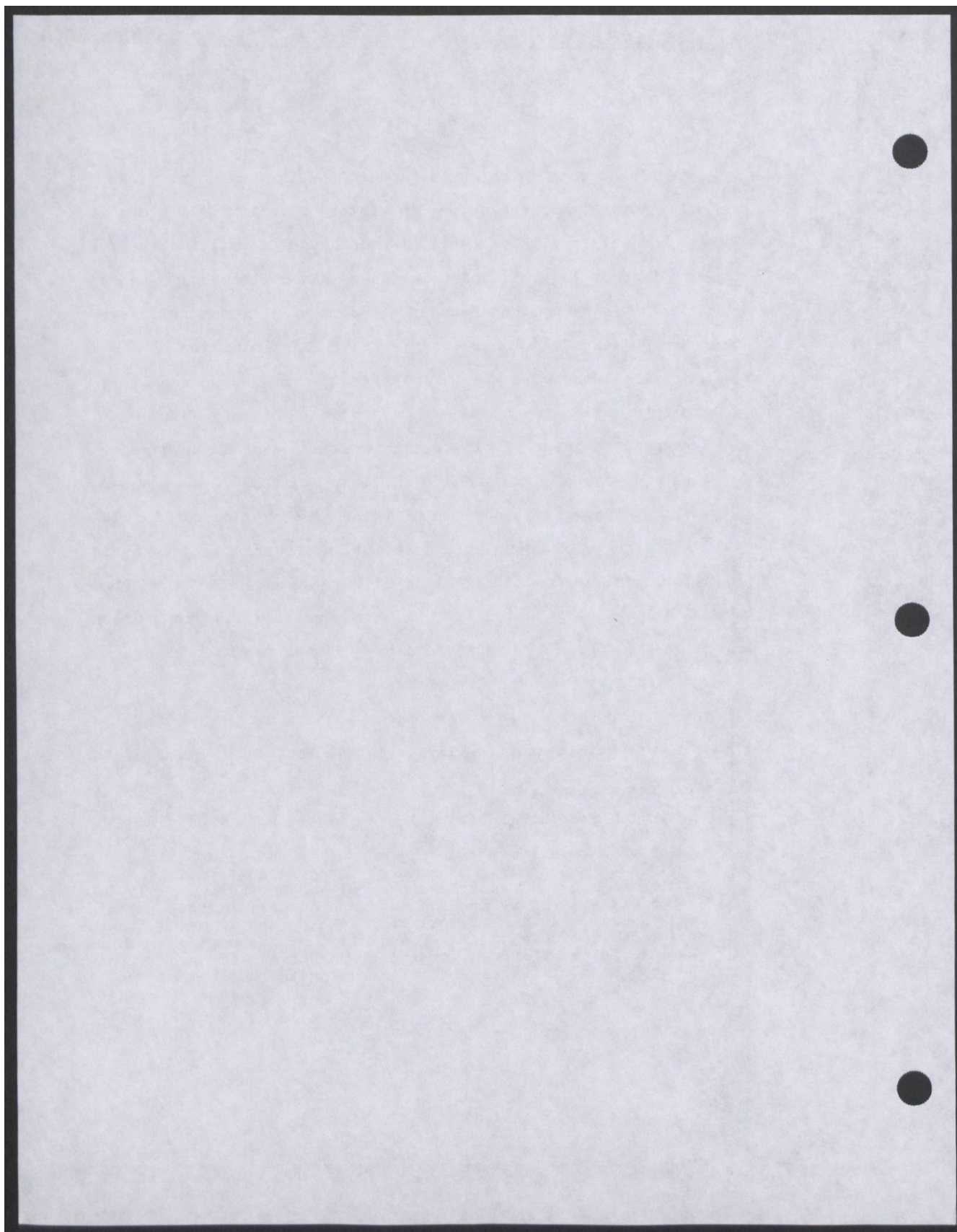
Purely analytical criticism of Spengler will, however, never discover the profounder levels of his philosophy.<sup>1</sup> These reside in his evocation of those elements of life that will ever be the subject of an inner experience, in his intuition of a mystic relationship to the infinite that expresses personality. Spengler's vision encompassed an approach to history which - whatever our opinion of his conclusions-transcended the mere causal analysis of data and the shallow dogmatism of many progress theories. No discussion of internal structure can invalidate the force of Spengler's description of Christ's journey to Jerusalem or the dramatic quality of the exposition of the dilemma in Michelangelo's soul. After all has been said, the conviction remains that Spengler has found a poetry in life which rises above the barren systematization of its manifestations.

To be sure, such an approach presents dangers. The latent anti-intellectualism may well lead to a cult of sheer

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1. In any philosophical discussion one must sharply distinguish the philosophical assumptions from their argument. A refutation of the latter may merely mean that the metaphysical postulates are capable of stronger supporting formulation. Logic can aid in evaluating internal consistency and relevance but is no test for the metaphysical assumptions which can be analyzed only by utilizing another set of assumptions, not an objective standard of validity. It is possible, therefore, to offer different explanations for all of Spengler's symbols of soul-images without refuting the concept of the soul of a culture. (See Appendix A - The Concepts of Meaning).

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 240

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 241

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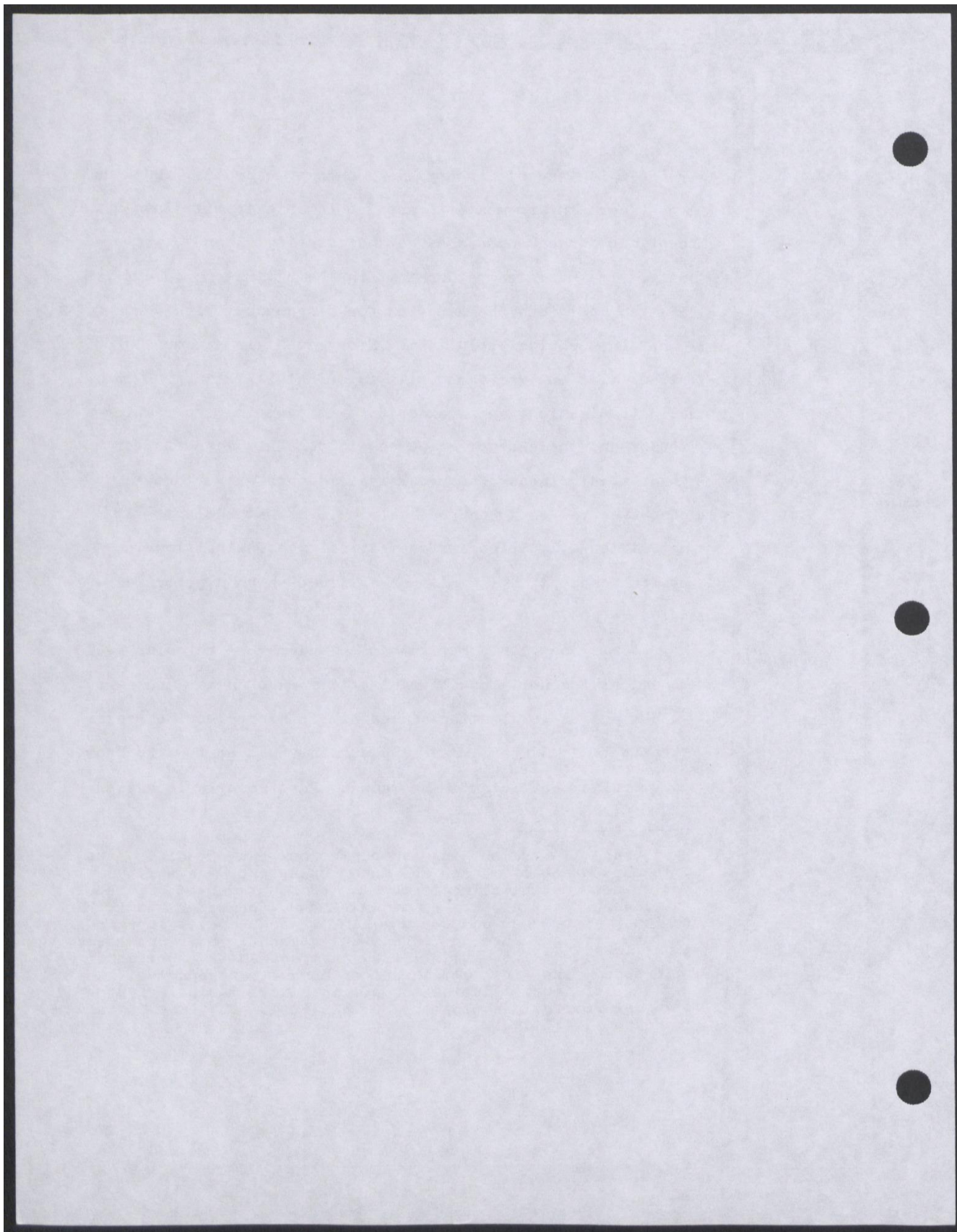
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power, of which recent history has seen many examples. But the fact that certain arguments if pressed to an extremity involve unacceptable consequences does not necessarily disprove their validity. It indicates rather that in the ultimate problems of life Man must find the sanction for his conduct within himself, not in technical solutions. Every event is not merely an effect but also an experience. As an effect it is subject to causal determination; as an experience it contains the meaning of freedom and the essence of personality. This accounts for the unsatisfactoriness of ethical systems such as Northrop's, who conceives values as approachable by mere methodology. It was not, after all, Spinoza's geometrical method that led to his ethical concepts but his inner attitude which a priori directed the method.

It was Spengler's merit that he understood this, as well as the underlying unity of all manifestations of human endeavor, though his poetic imagination caused him to overvalue the realm of necessity and underestimate the purposive element<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps the most serious criticism to be made against Spengler consists

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1. Dante has illustrated, in perhaps the only way possible, the interdependence of reason and inner experience, causality and grace. On the climb to the top of Mount Purgatory, he has absorbed the essence of human wisdom. Henceforth only an inner experience can conduct him. When Beatrice appears he turns for guidance to Virgil, but reason is here powerless. Just as Plato's Idea of the Good, just as Kant's experience of freedom, the final attainment of human transcendence, is a matter of inner illumination not technical manipulation. See post for full development of this idea. Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 242  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 243

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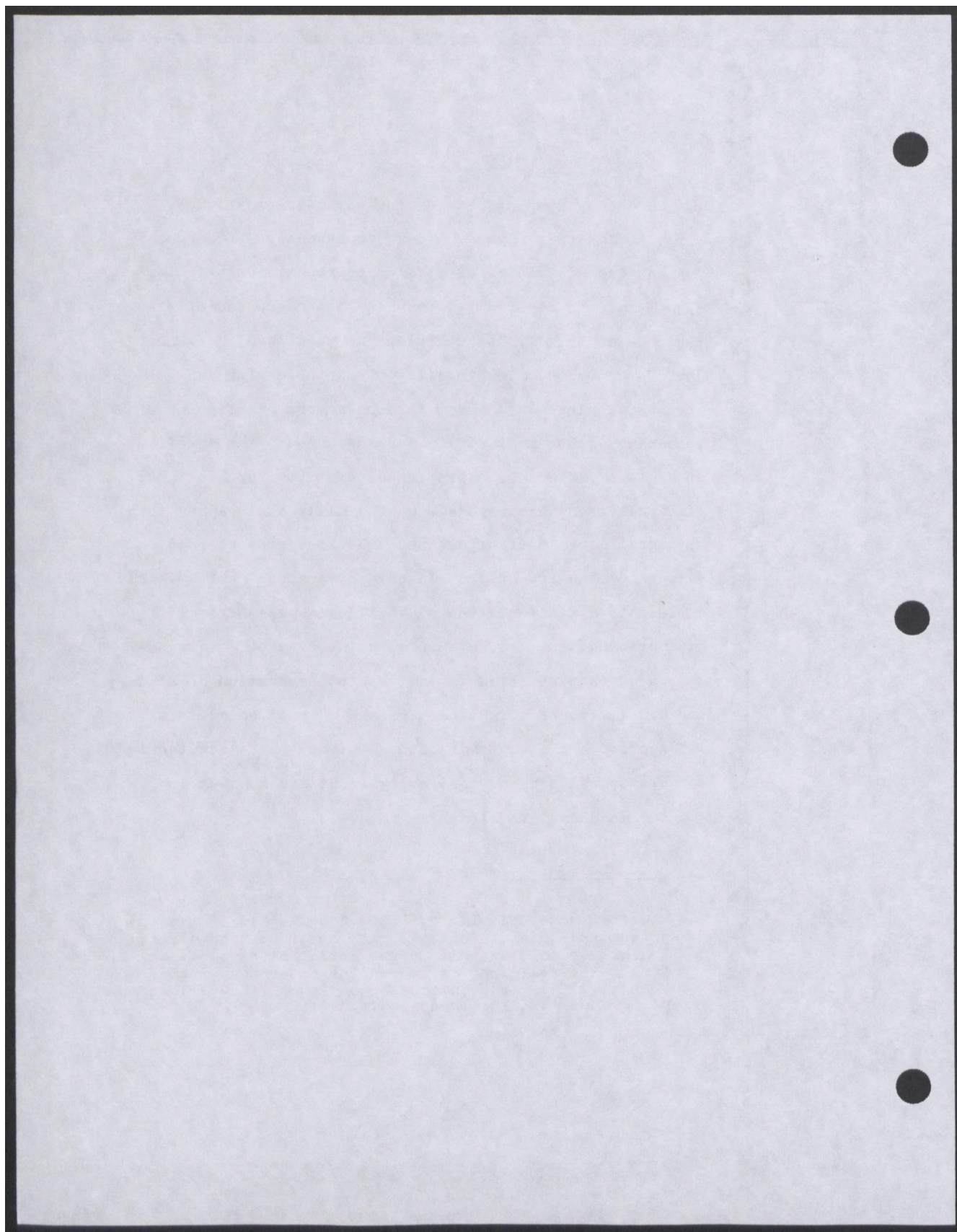
of his uneasy swaying between the world-as-experience, which is the only approach to an apprehension of purposiveness and his vision of it as mere repetition of power-phenomena. He constantly stresses the uniqueness of experience and yet finds in history no more than the generality of phenomena. The totality of man's longing can not, however, achieve a sanction through a mere cataloguing of appearances, but must attain meaning through the specific in Man's experiences. Spengler attempts to resolve these difficulties by his emphasis on the historical rather than the moral aspects of existence.<sup>1</sup> He is ever concerned with an evaluation of the elements of success, which really represents a manifestation of a will-to-system from a pragmatic rather than an ethical point-of-view. This emphasis on success leads to that strict separation of History and Causality, of which the person of Christ constitutes not a proof but a contradiction. But no truth is without its historical tendency and every effective conduct implies some normative element.

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1. See foot note Vol. II. p. 216. "The method of the present work is historical. It therefore recognizes the historical, as well as the anti-historical as a fact. The religious method on the other hand looks upon itself as true and the opposite as false. The difference is quite insuperable."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 244

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 245

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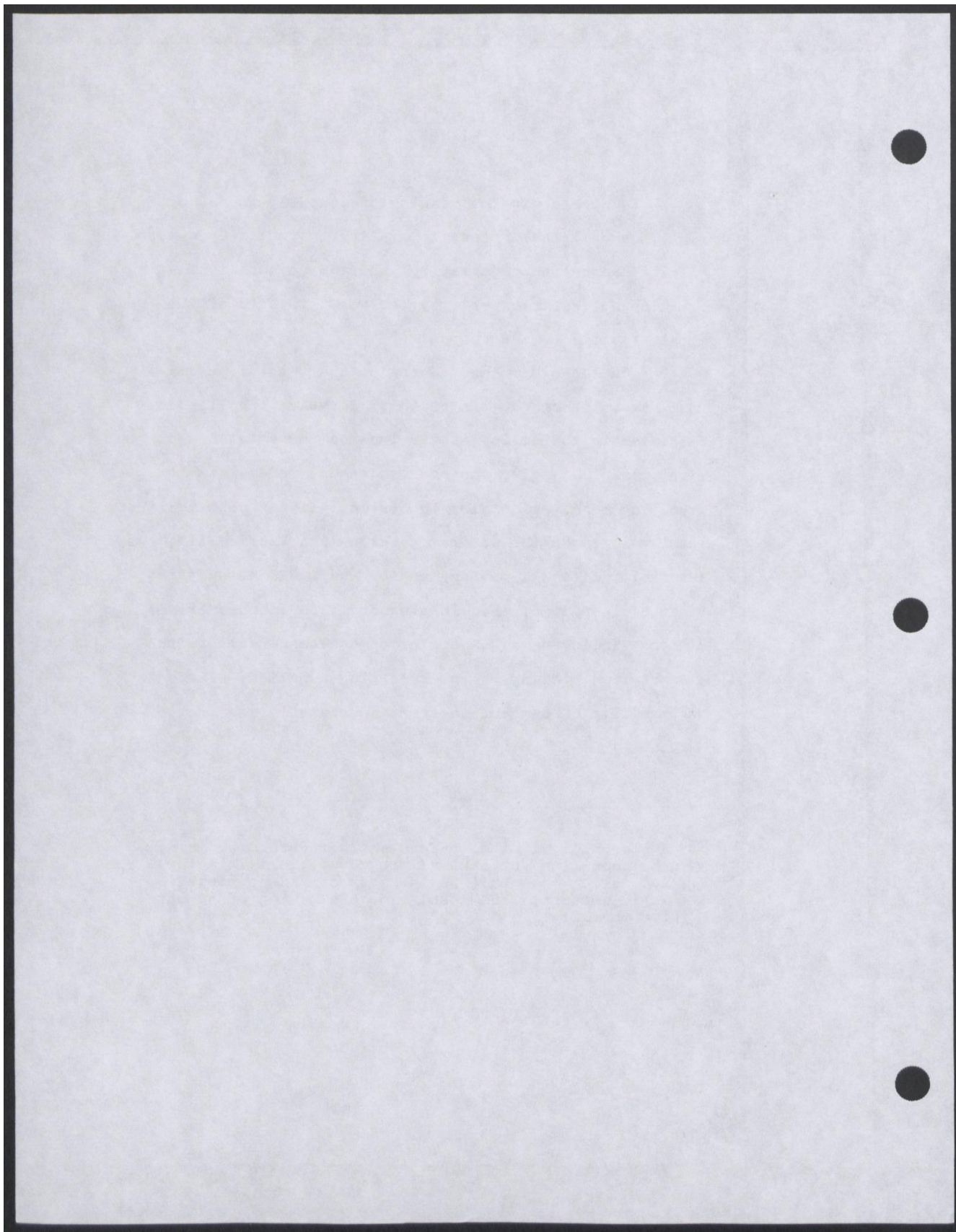
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What else is the meaning of Canossa, where not even dire political necessity availed to turn away a suppliant supported by dogma, but who was reduced to that position, at least in part, by the very strength of the moral sanction of the church?

On the other hand, Spengler's attempted pragmatism makes the charge of Pessimism largely inapplicable. Pessimism in the ethical sense implies the existence of standards.<sup>1</sup> Spengler, however, makes no more claim to embodying moral principles in his analysis of politics than Machiavelli. On the contrary, again like Machiavelli, one can easily detect a preference for the lived metaphysics of an earlier time, when longing and life embodied itself in more virile forms. Spengler conceives himself in the rôle of a physician, who by informing a patient of the incurability of cancer, does not advocate it as a way-of-life.

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1. The problem might be raised whether pessimism is not the condition for ethical progress. Certainly the assumption that this is the best of all possible worlds does not lend itself to an attitude of purposive morality.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 246  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 247

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To be sure, an acceptance of his conclusions and the recognition of the transitoriness of existence, may well lead to a kismet resignation or a complete unconcern with anything except material conditions of success. But this is only one tendency implicit in Spengler. Its acceptance constitutes the revelation of a personality rather than an invalidation of Spengler's position. No necessary connection exists between permanence of existence and moral conduct in the historical realm, any more than in private life. Ethics can not be derived from a purposiveness of the universe revealed in phenomenal appearances. That certainty of action is not given to man. On the other hand, the recognition of limits, that one is man and not God, may in nations, as in individuals, serve as the basis for ethical criteria and the concept of the moral personality of man.<sup>1</sup>

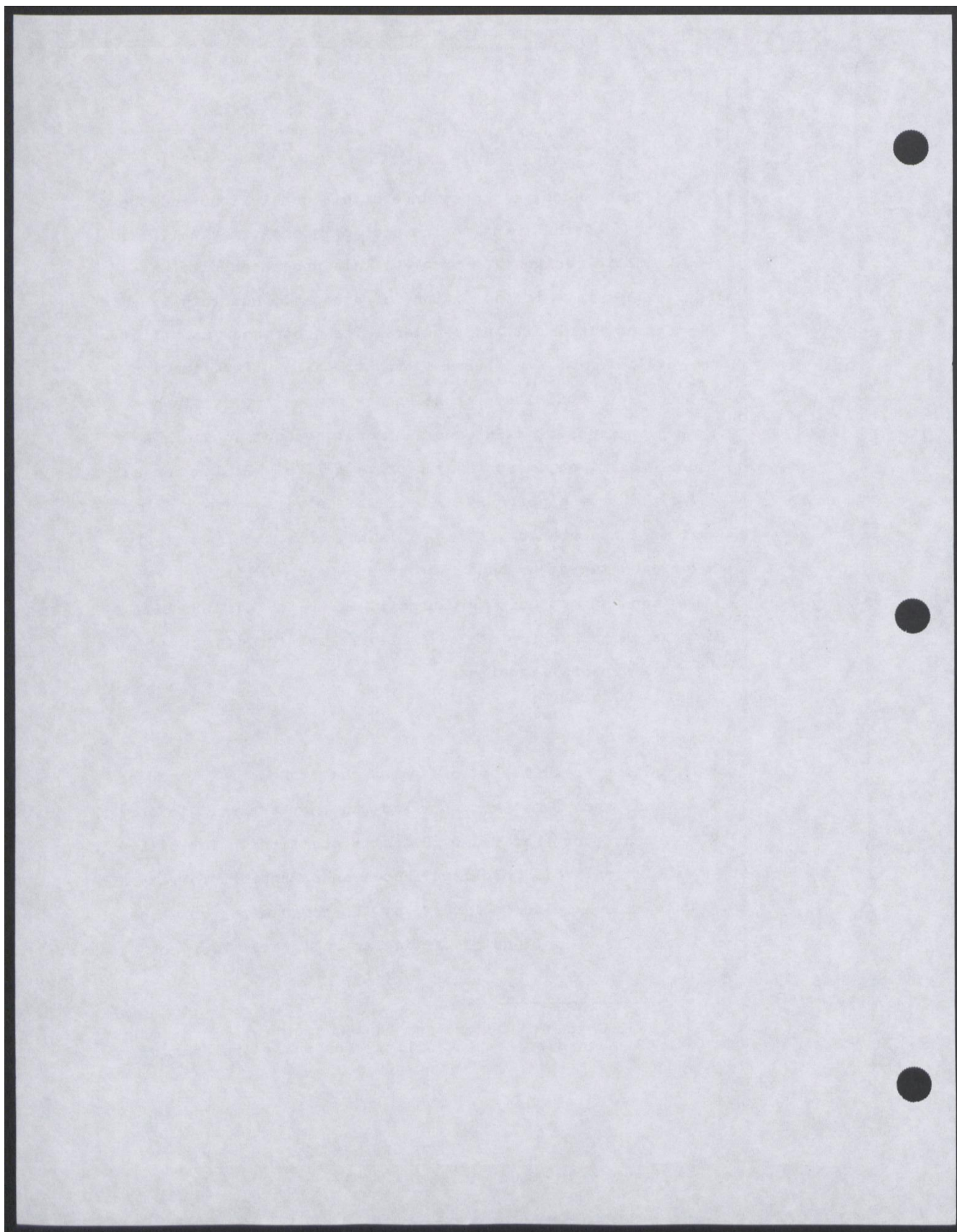
Spengler states at one point that the West is composed of Kantians who do not know how Kantian they are. It is certain that he, too, has followed Kant's position to its ultimate conclusion. All phenomenal appearance requires for its cognition not only forms imposed by the human mind, but those very forms are functions of particular cultures. They do not exhaust

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1. See post Chapter "History and Man's Experience of Morality", Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility" for full development.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 248

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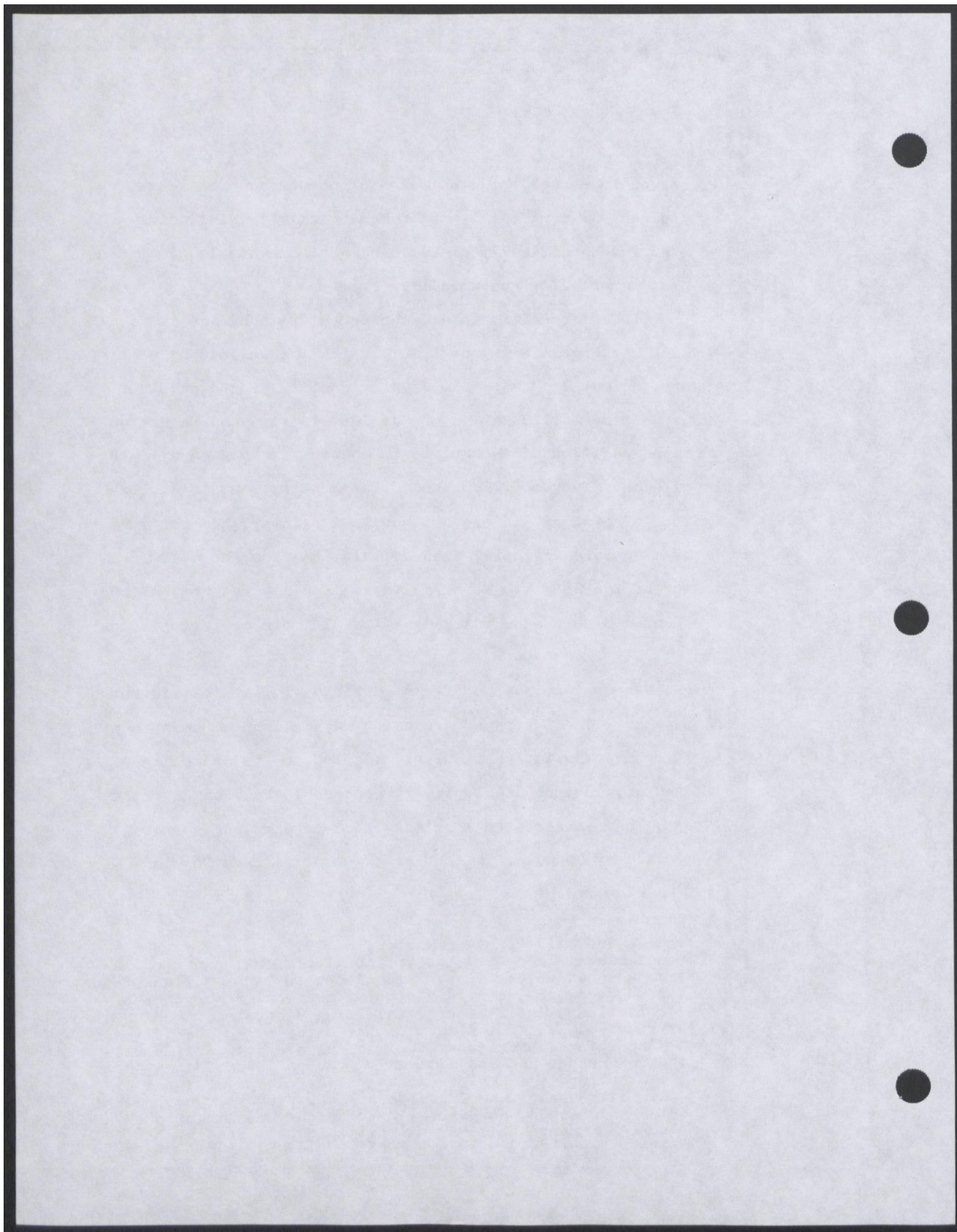
themselves in establishing patterns of phenomenal knowledge, but include all manifestations of human activity, including those numina specifically excepted by Kant: our knowledge of God, freedom, immortality and morality.

If Kant conditioned all subsequent metaphysics it is certain that Hegel is immanent in most of the philosophy of history, no matter how passionate the denial. His concept of history as the manifestation of the idea in time and Nature as the representation of the spirit in Space<sup>1</sup> was adopted by Spengler with but minor modifications. The destiny that is our experience of history differs neither in its inward necessity nor in anything more essential than formulation from the self-realization of the Spirit. For Hegel's rationality was not, after all, Kant's pure reason but had as its ultimate criterion actuality.

Darwin, too, be he ever so derided, is implicit in much of Spengler. The theory of evolution may well be no more than a working hypothesis, particularly adapted to the mentality of 19th century England and logically replacable by a catastrophe concept. Nevertheless, its primary test of physical survival is repeated by Spengler as the criterion of fitness in his<sup>2</sup> World-as-History.

1. Hegel - The Philosophy of History p. 72.
2. Spengler's striking counterpart is Vico's philosophy of history, which however is never mentioned in "The Decline of the West". Vico, too, saw in history a cyclical recurrence of civilizations, their growth exhibiting discrete phases of activity. The occult wisdom of the early stage bases itself on a religious experience. But as the mystery of life disappears, reason becomes dominant. The philosophical wisdom of the Culture's maturity expresses the claims of a rationality fully conscious of its power. No stage of development can be maintained, however. The necessary realization of a Culture's immanence follows an inevitable pattern. Vico is thus the modern precursor of a systematic cyclical theory of history.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 250  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 251

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Scholarly criticism of Spengler has been sporadic and frequently besides the point. Sabine's brief summary is a tirade<sup>1</sup> and not an analysis. V. S. Yarros confines himself to characterizing Spengler as the apostle of the new pessimism citing in opposition the "progress" achieved in social legislation and political liberty by Western man.<sup>2</sup> The article suffers from having been written on the eve of the most demoniac outburst of the "progressive" West.

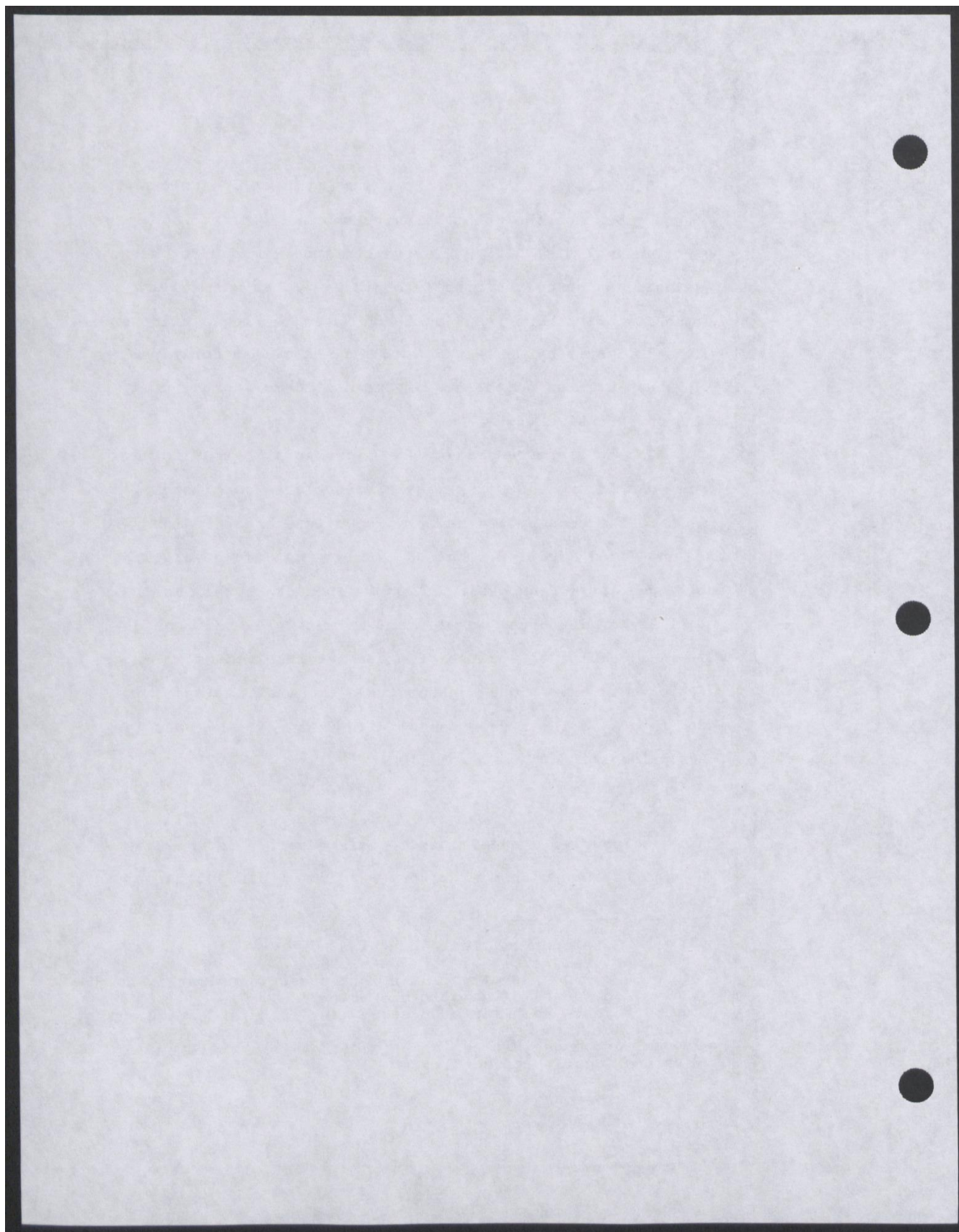
The most profound analysis is probably that of Eduard Meyer,<sup>3</sup> who, though accepting many of Spengler's conclusions, opposes to the concept of the organic culture of definite extends and fixed duration, that of overlapping culture-circles, whose capability of absorbing alien influences as well as their possibility of different development is manifold and whose decline is a result not a cause of excessive involvement in imperialistic ventures.<sup>4</sup> Thus a purposive element of choice is imported into Spengler's development, its fatedness the result,<sup>5</sup> at least in part, of human volition.

Is Spengler a determinist? This question is not as absurd as might appear from a cursory reading of his philosophy.

1. Sabine - Western Political Thought p. 705.
2. Open Court Vol. 47; 253, p. 8 June 1933.
3. Schroeter - "Der Streit um Spengler" presents primarily an analysis of conflicting points of view.
4. Eduard Meyer - Spengler's Untergang des Abendlandes - Curtis Verlag, Berlin.
5. Though, of course, it can be argued that this volition is itself a function of destiny.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 252

**Image ID:** 15213041



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 253

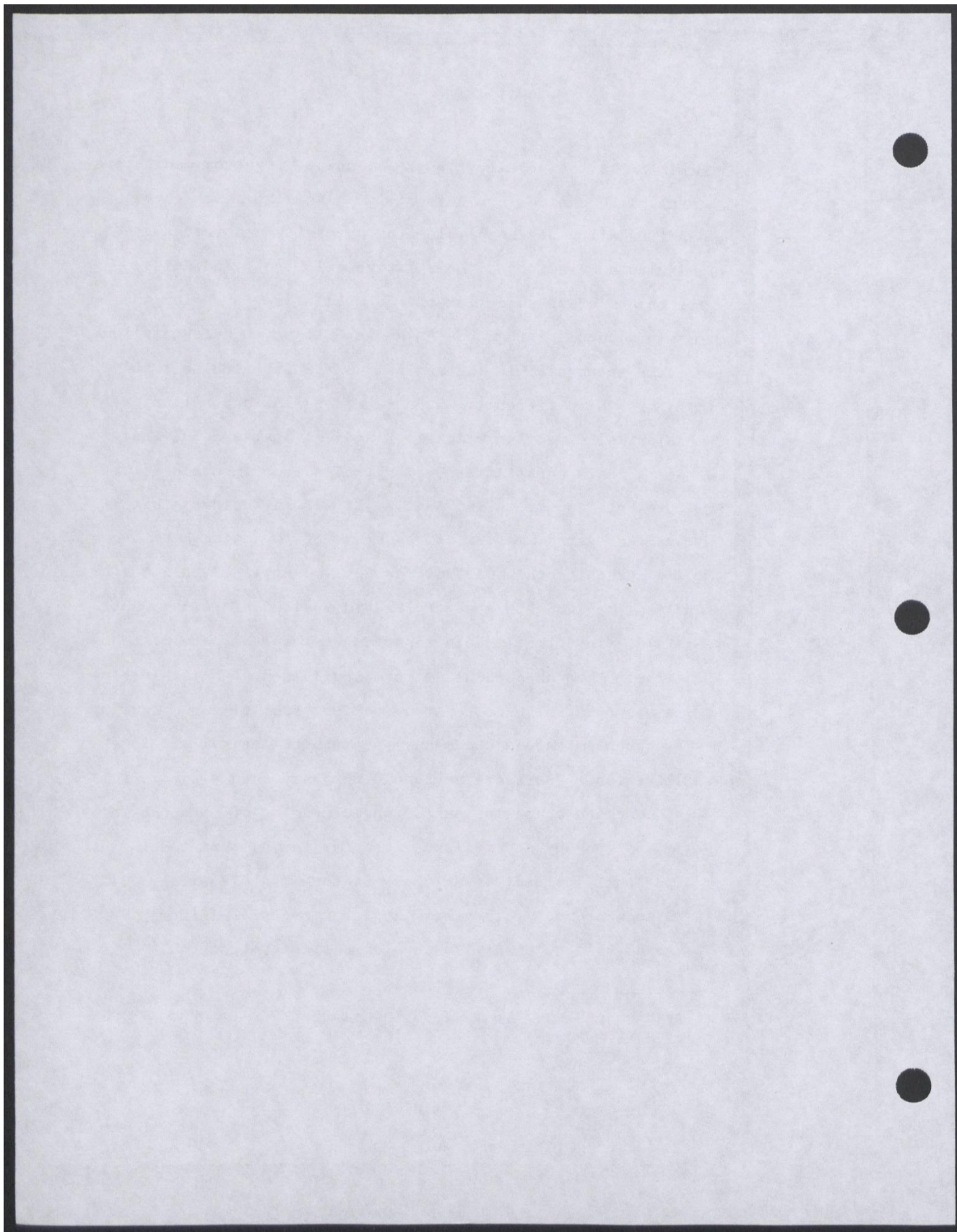
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Determinism is, after all, a flexible concept. Freedom can never mean unlimited choice, nor determinism plantlike dependence. Any manifestation of the problems of necessity and freedom, constitutes a question of the relative weight of tendencies rather than a crass assertion of incompatibles. Spengler took this into account, though his enthusiasm leads to a formulation that seems to negate his theoretical awareness. Incident and destiny are the differentia which represent the opposition. The historical direction which is fixed and unalterable, inescapable as death-constitutes Destiny. Its embodiment in actuality, however, depends on Incident.<sup>1</sup> It was an Incident that Columbus discovered America as the agent of the Spanish rather than the French throne and that thereby the style of politics of the next centuries was set by Madrid instead of Paris. But it was a destiny, that the late period of the West should accomplish itself through absolutism to a Revolution. That this revolution occurred in France was an Incident, but it was a Destiny that Napoleonism should accompany the turn of the culture into a civilization. There are personal Incidents when a great man such as Napoleon concentrates the whole meaning of an epoch in himself and thereby accomplishes in a few years, what under the impersonal Incident of an epoch it took the Classical decades to achieve.<sup>2</sup> The inner logic of events is fixed, the general tendencies of the development determined, but

1. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 139 et seq.
2. Spengler op. cit. Vol. I. p. 149.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 254  
**Image ID:** 15213043



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 255

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its incidental appearance is the result of the self-assurance and the work of people who can live a destiny rather than suffer it.<sup>1</sup>

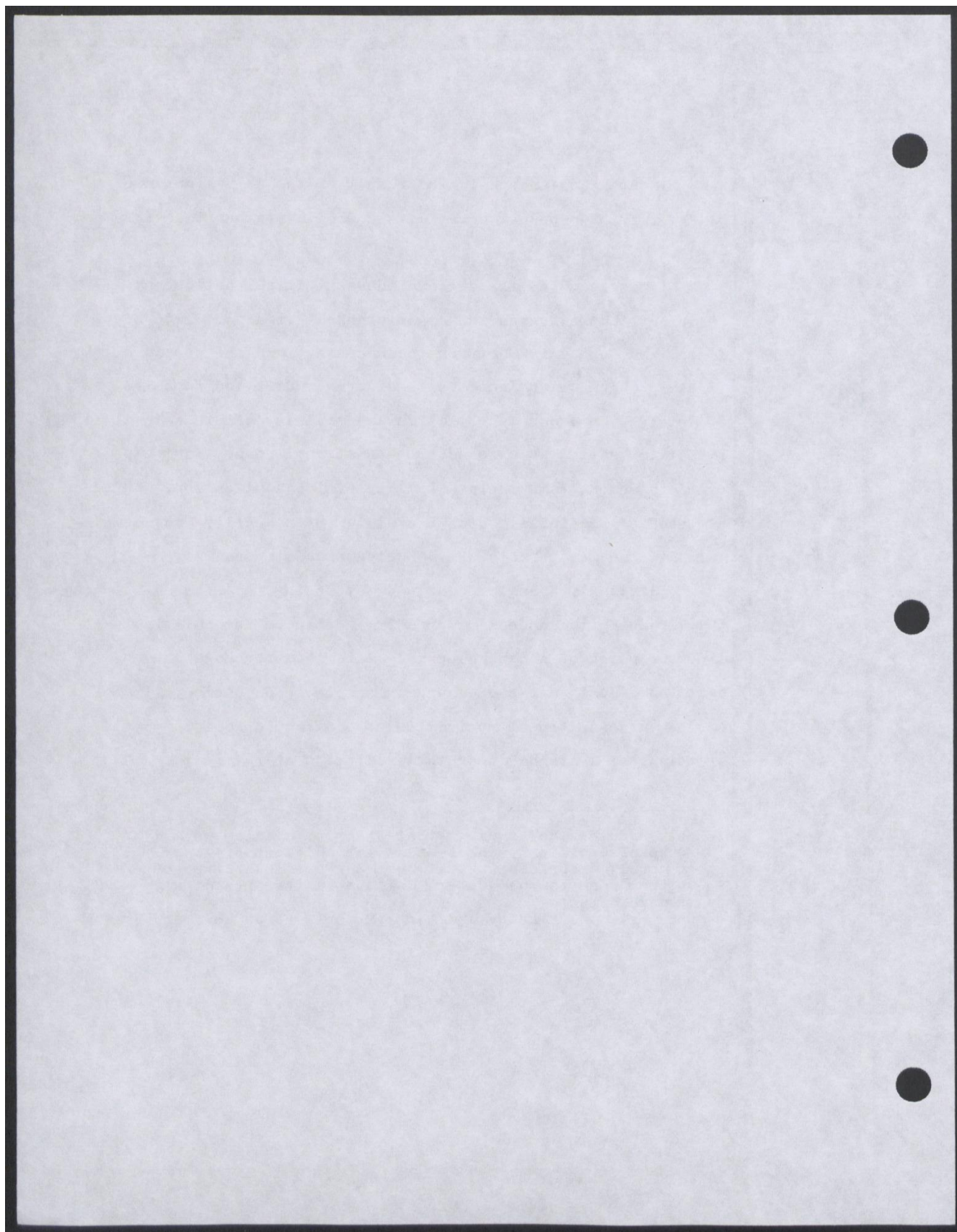
This leads to the dilemma inherent in all philosophy of history that stresses the organic aspect as a postulate of action: the connection between the necessary and the possible. It is a problem which Kant too considered and failed to solve completely. In order to establish the validity of his categorical imperative as a foundation of eternal peace, Kant was forced to demonstrate the possibility of its application. But his proof of feasibility became a dictum of necessity and seems to negate the moral basis of the categorical imperative.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly Spengler concluded by posing the alternatives of doing the necessary or doing nothing. Yet this is the description of a psychological state rather than a guide to action. Just as the pleasure principle in psychology it ascribes a definitional motivation to past action but is totally useless as a standard for the prediction of future

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1. This refutes the argument that Spengler's later work "The House of Decision" represents a logical inconsistency. He merely describes in that book the possible lines of actions open to the Western Culture in its present stage of development.
  2. See post. Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 256

**Image ID:** 15213045



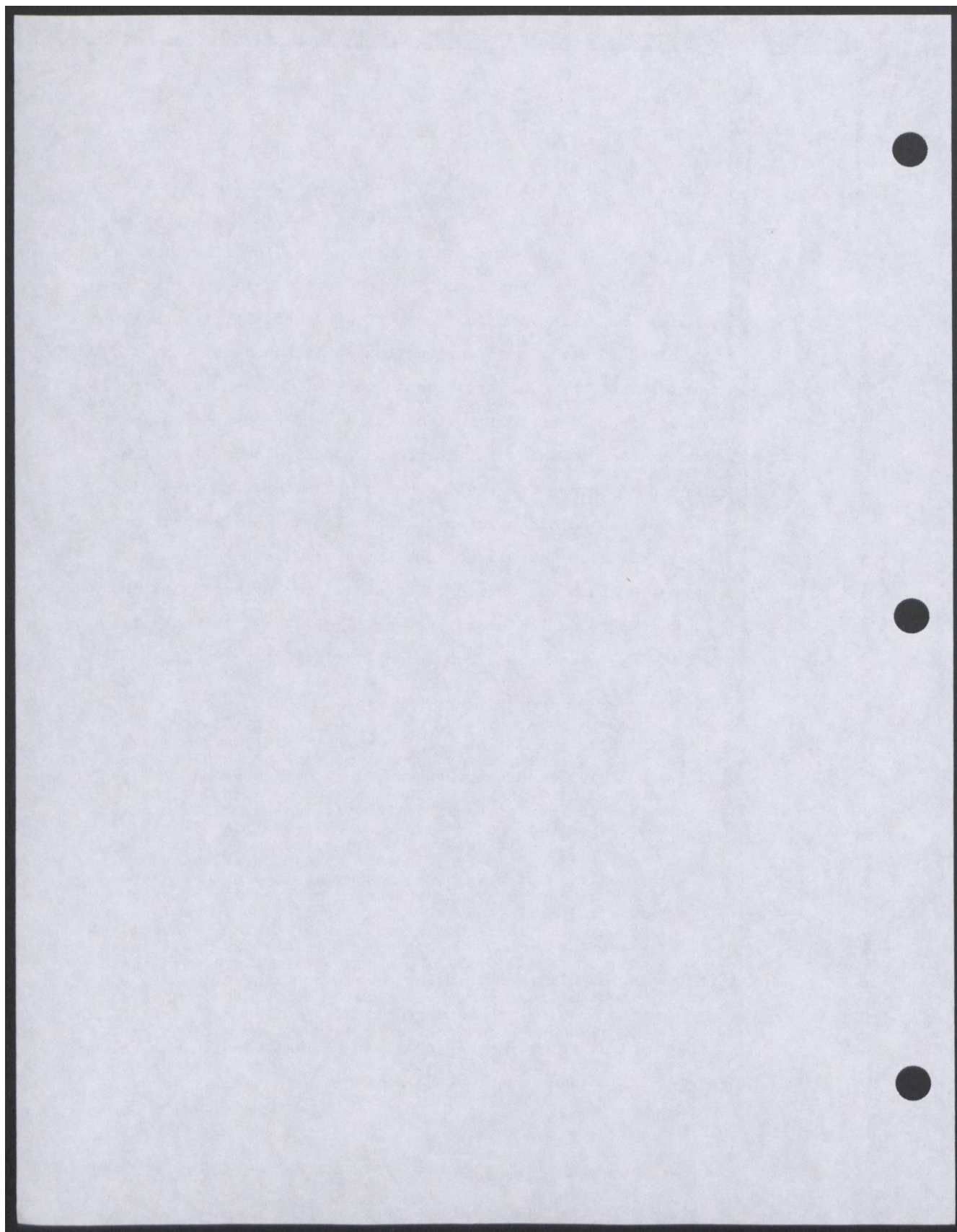
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1  
events. Man may ever desire to do the necessary or pleasurable, if in varying the fields of activity and though the emphasis may be on either the moral or material aspect of life. However, not the postulate of necessity but the content ascribed to it constitutes the real criterion for motivated activity. Spengler's only standard for a necessary action is its success. Apart from the fact that this represents no aid whatever in the really crucial personal or political decisions - for what makes them problematical is the existence of difficult alternatives - he offers no standard for what he means by success. Christ died on the Cross and his mission to Jerusalem was a miserable momentary failure. Was his action, therefore historically unnecessary? Huss was burned in Constance and Luther split the Church. Whose action embodied necessity? Was Luther possible without Huss? Some day, Protestant Christianity may disappear

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1. The difficulty of the pleasure principle derives from the hedonistic implications of the word in everyday language. For what is really meant by the pleasure principle? The psychologist counters arguments that most persons are incapable of striking a rational balance between various possible sources of satisfaction with an assertion of the unconscious factor of motivation. Since it is a fact that many persons commit acts which are actually painful, the psychologist finds refuge in a balance of greater and lesser pain. But what he is really saying is that every action must have a preponderance of motives for its performance and he is thus describing motivated activity - if not merely activity - not pleasure. Of course, a scientist has a perfect right to adopt any definition suitable (see Appendix A) provided that he stays within the conventional meaning of his terms. Moreover the equating of pleasure and motive is really no help at all for it merely shifts the main problem from a definition of motive to a definition of pleasure. It is never clear whether actions result from pleasure or whether pleasure is that form which actions result and in the final analysis both conceptions must be used. The same argument holds for the "necessity concept."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 258

**Image ID:** 15213047



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 259

Image ID: 15213048

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from the face of the earth. Will that reduce Luther to a meaningless Incident? Moreover, since history is itself a function of the soul-image of a Culture and its awareness a result of its symbolism, it appears that Destiny and Incident, necessary and accidental are merely transitory manifestations of a particular depth-experience and not applicable as a guide to activity.

Two misconceptions seem to be involved in the problem of necessity as a sanction of conduct: a confusion of the deed and the action, and of the intent with the tendency. No activity can in retrospect be proved to have resulted from free will-the fact of action indicating a preponderance of factors on one side. In this view all actions are determined. On the other hand only deeds embodying the logic of history are necessary. How can one reconcile this dilemma?

The intent and the tendency of historical figure are radically different, as Spengler frequently points out. Of what use then is a rule to do the necessary? Wherein lies the mystery of results totally incommensurable with intention and yet dependent for their appearance on such willed activity?

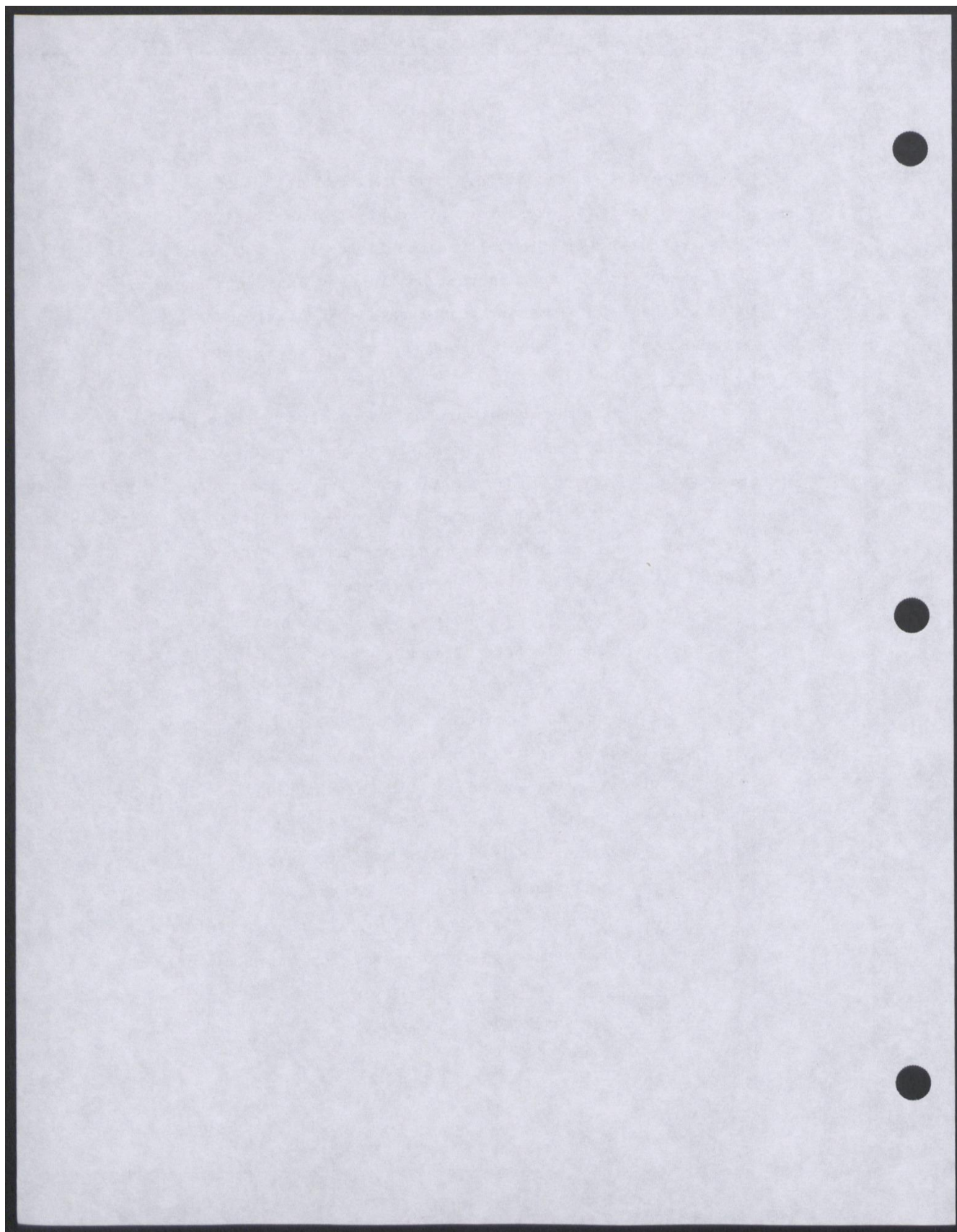
The greater the interval between the event and the analysis, the more determined does the act appear, as Tolstoi already emphasized.<sup>1</sup> With the passage of time, all the manifold possibilities that accompanied performance are forgotten and only the

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1. Tolstoi - War and Peace - Epilogue.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 260

**Image ID:** 15213049



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action remains, a testimony to its irrevocability. Man, despite Hume, can never imagine anything totally out of his frame of reference and the detailed historical development that might have ensued, if, for example Richileu had not interfered in the 30-years war, is beyond the scope of even the most poetic historian.

Undoubtedly, the frustrated soul of a suddenly traditionless Germany in the 1920's cried out for something to hold on to. But none of Hitler's lieutenants, as evidence abundantly shows, could have unleashed the demoniac forces that were eventually produced by the Fuehrer. Yet Hitler's fate hung on a thread many times. Ever some little incident saved him, always in the minds of the chief actors there existed meaningful alternatives.<sup>1</sup> Whatever our view of the necessity of these events today, the key question is in how far necessity could have served either as a guide to action or for the prediction of events in 1933. Similarly Spengler's analysis of the British political development contains many challenging observations. He has not explained, however, why it was the Fronde and not the State which triumphed in the 17th century.

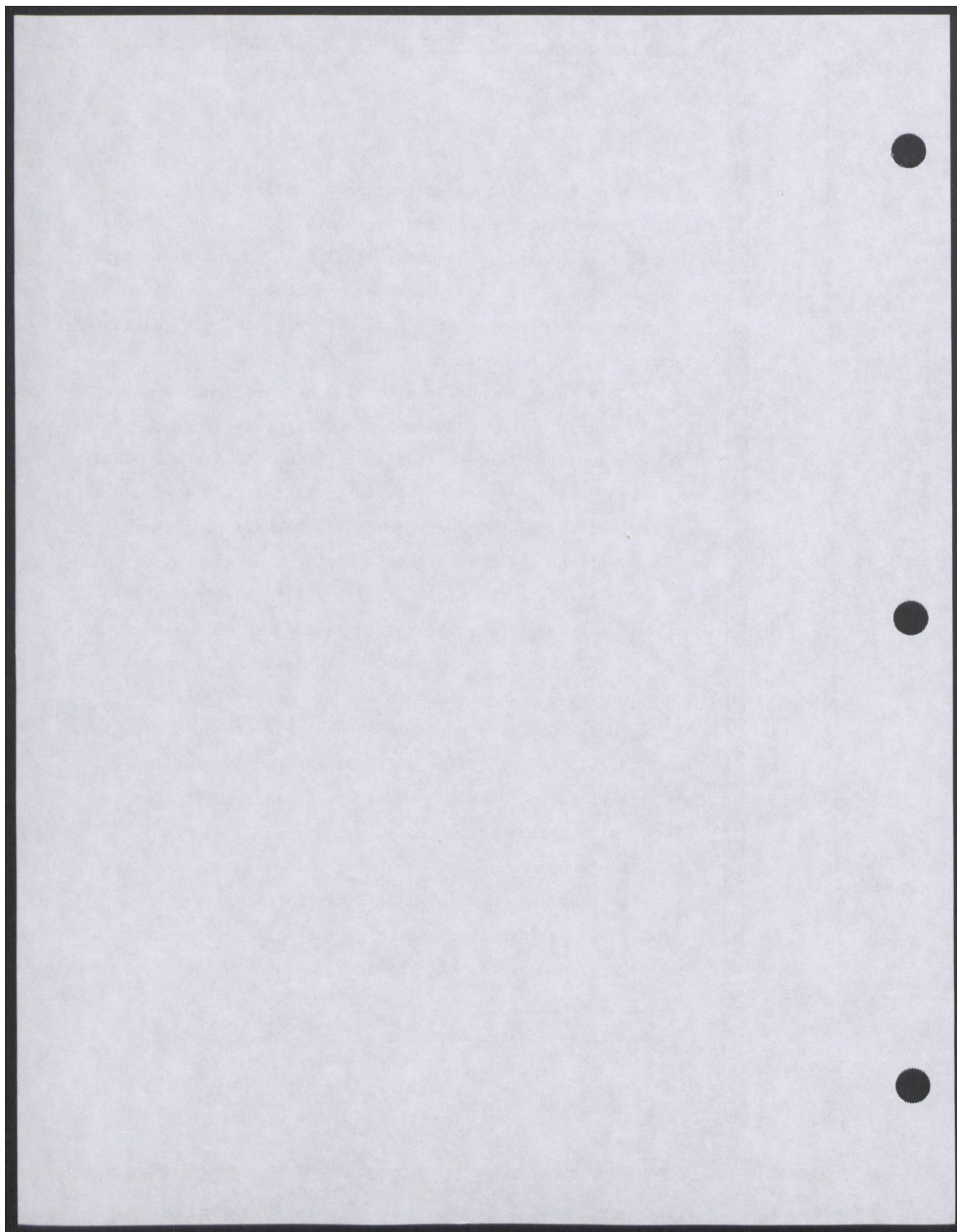
This demonstrates the essential characteristic of historical necessity. No matter what we may think of its compelling quality, it ever appears to man in the guise of freedom. There always seem to exist alternatives, between which one can

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1. See Gisevius - To the Bitter End. Vol. II. Chapter 1.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 262

**Image ID:** 15213051



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 263

Image ID: 15213052

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choose, and without such alternatives life would be unthinkable. This is perhaps the profoundest meaning of the union of the categorical imperative with historical necessity in Kant. <sup>1</sup> Necessity as a guide to action is useless, even for a pragmatist. The number of historical figures who died believing themselves to have failed, and yet represented the future of their culture is legion, as is the number of those whose pinnacle of temporary success merely served to hide the historical hollowness of their position.

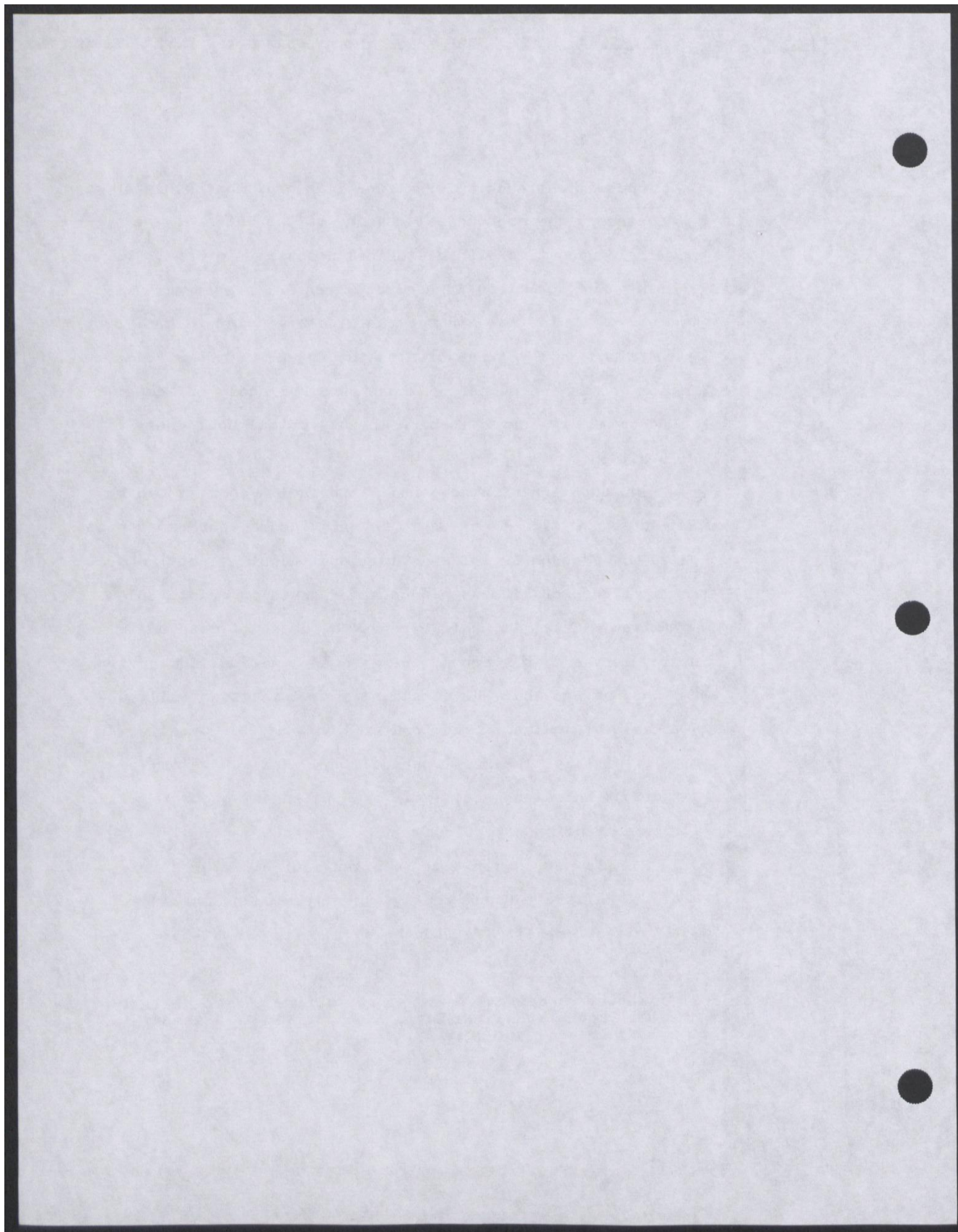
The question of conceptual historical necessity can be safely left unsettled then for it is prejudged by our experience of freedom. Freedom is not a definitional quantity, but an inner experience of life as a process of deciding meaningful alternatives. This, it must be repeated, does not mean unlimited choice. Everybody is a product of an age, a nation, and environment. But, beyond that, he constitutes what is essentially unapproachable by analysis, the form of the form, the creative essence of history, the moral personality. However we may explain actions in retrospect, their accomplishment occurred with the inner conviction of choice.

This is not to say that Spengler's view of the development of the culture through youth, maturity, to decline and death is without merit. To life belongs death, in history, as

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1. This, however, can not serve as the ultimate reconciliation of this inconsistency in Kant. See post Ch IV "History and Man's Experience of Morality."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 264  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 265

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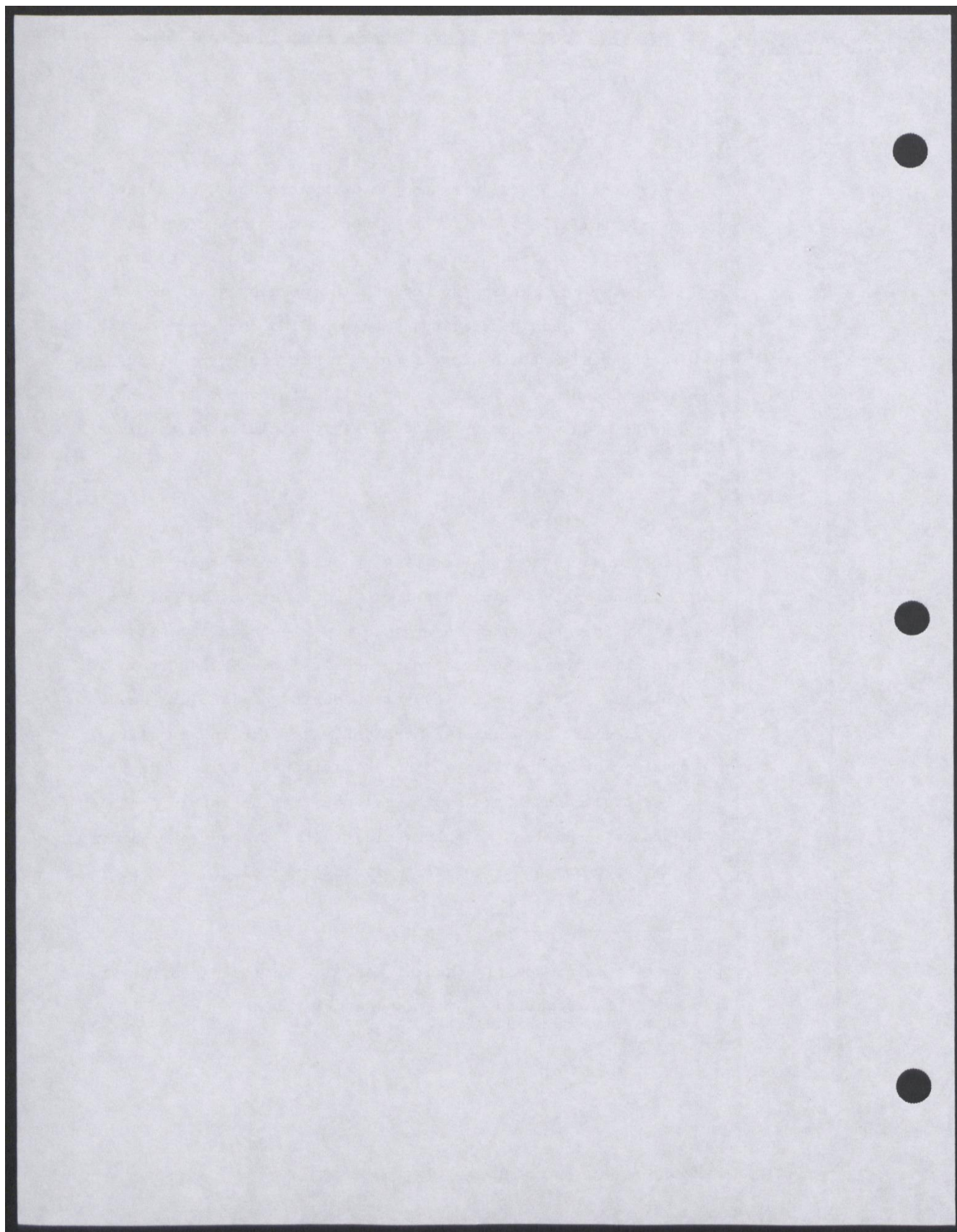
in individuals. No culture has yet been permanent, no striving completely fulfilled. It is not given to man to choose his age, or to the statesman the condition of his time. But the form taken by the particular period, the meaning given to life is the task of each generation. Man can find the sanction for his actions only within himself, not in the discovery of purposes in phenomena.<sup>1</sup> It is a responsibility correctly seen by Kant as a duty since even inactivity postulates an absolute norm.<sup>2</sup>

And so we come to the final problem in Spengler that of Youth and Age. Can one ascribe organic periods to Cultures? In how far is the analogy to organic experience valid? It seems certain that to man the problem of age is closely tied to a physiological state. After a certain period of life the knowledge of a limit becomes ever more definite, the inexorability of development in the light of one's past inevitable. The knowledge of the transitoriness of existence is responsible for much consistency in action, and gives rise to the tragedy of the man who must live out an essentially meaningless belief, only to

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1. On this point see also Schweitzer "The Philosophy of Civilization" p. 271 et. seq.
  2. For full discussion of these generalities see post Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility".

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 266

**Image ID:** 15213055



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 267

Image ID: 15213056

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give content to his past. This is the drama of Rubashov in "Darkness at Noon", and of Ivan Karamazoff who confesses, not indeed because he committed the murder, but because the crime was implicit in his previous life, which could acquire meaning only through this sacrifice.

Yet age is not exclusively a physiological state. Life exhibits an eternal recurrence of problems, the settlement of each conditioning and weakening the ability to respond to others.

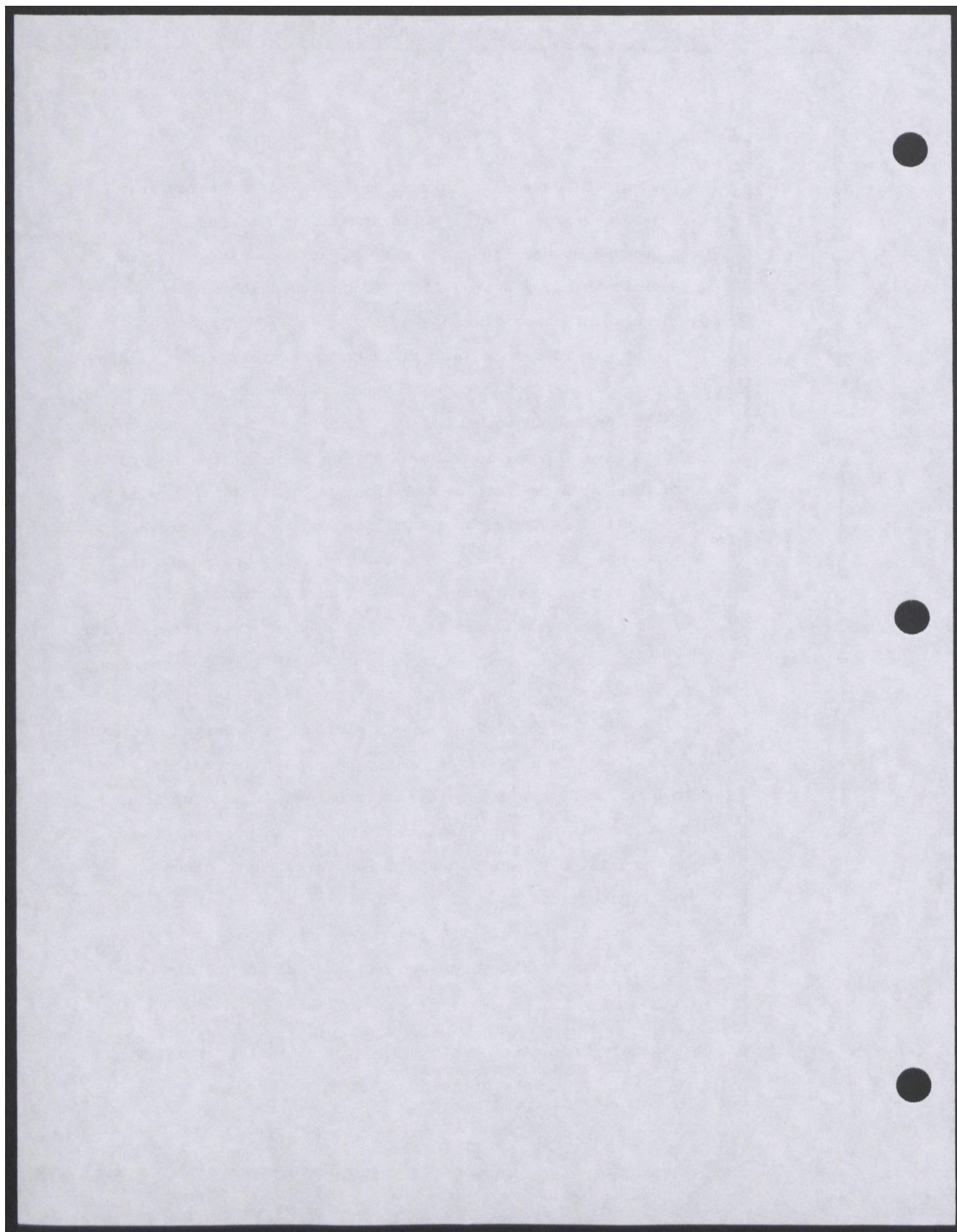
It is a dilemma in which abstract argument can not go much further.<sup>1</sup> The physiological analogy is not tenable with cultures, yet the existence of civilizations may be conceived as a succession of dilemmas. Toynbee correctly analyzed the challenge and response element, but turned it into a mechanistic method for material salvation. It appears, that the solution of each problem takes away something of the ability to experience its inner meaning, gradually lessening the intensity of the response. The League of Nations was a dream, the United Nations is merely a technical clearing house, perhaps therefore of longer duration as its inner idea is dissipated. Ageing in a Culture may well be the gradual solution of the problems immanent in its existence, their death a form of disenchantment.<sup>2</sup>

Abstract argument can give no aid, because the fact of existence forces a position towards life regardless of the state of the Culture in which one lives and because the very certainty of

1. See post Ch. IV. The Sense of Responsibility for limitation of a theory of action, which attempts to derive its attainability from phenomenal reality.
2. See post. "The Sense of Responsibility" for Development of this Concept.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 268

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 269

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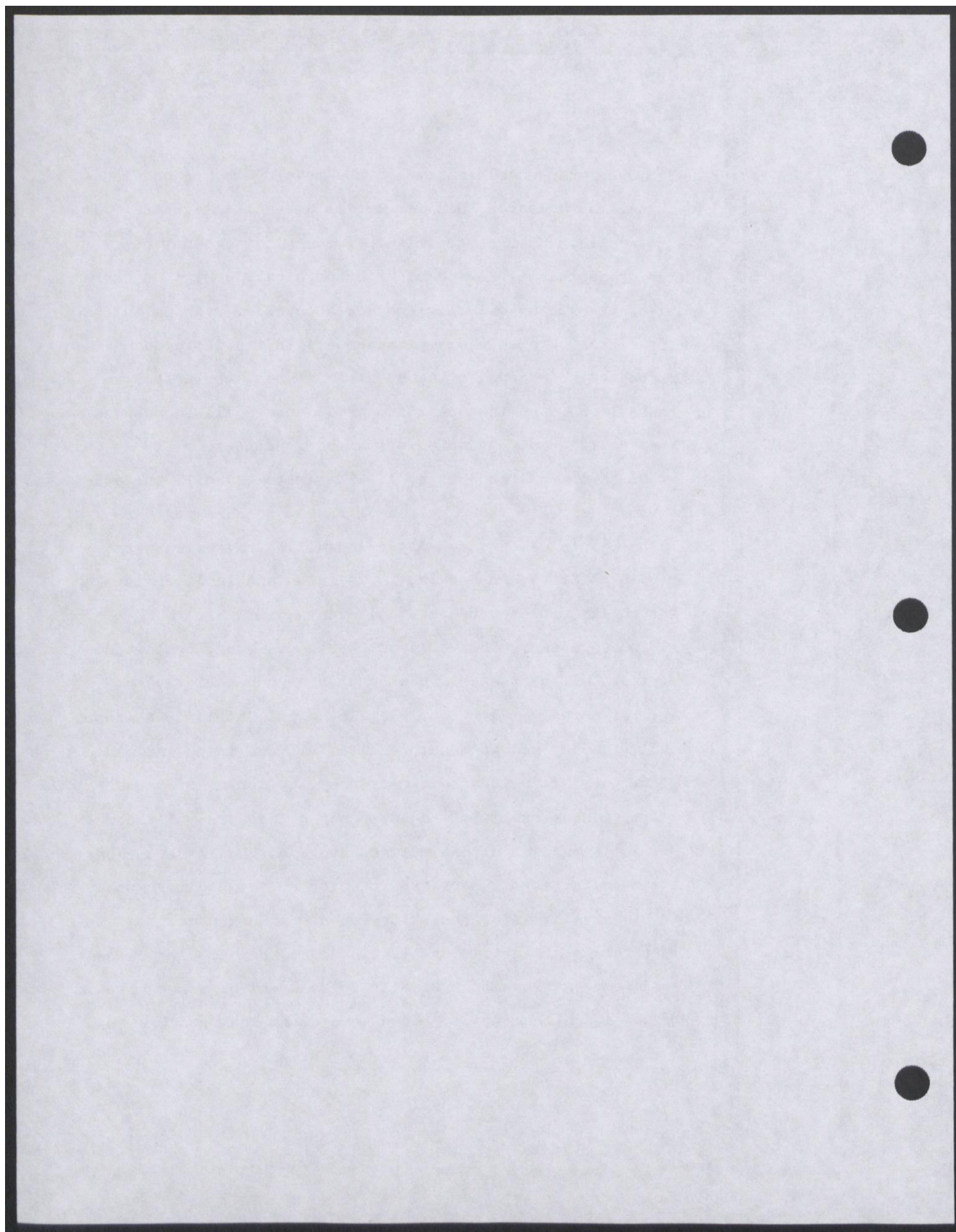
transitoriness can enable man to give a meaning to his existence.

All the Cultures Spengler treats have disintegrated. It is of no avail to charge pessimism. Immortality can not be achieved by postulate. But behind the physical decay that seems the lot of everything existing emerges a level of meaning which embodies a type of attainable permanence. In its death each Culture bequeathed forms to the successor which, whatever Spengler's assertion, were the condition precedent to all subsequent problemation and the foundation of future greatness.

Mommsen has stated it well: "We are faced with the end of the Roman Republic. For half a millenium we observed her ruling the countries of the Mediterranean. We have seen her collapse in politics, in morals, in religion and in literature, not through the violence of external events, but through a gradual inward decay. The world which Caesar found, contained much of the noble heritage of past centuries and an infinite abundance of pomp and glory, but little spirit, still less taste. Above all, the joy had gone out of life. It was indeed an old world; not to be made young again even by the genius of Caesar's patriotism. The serenity of the dawn can not return until darkness has set in and night has reigned supreme. But nevertheless he brought to the sorely harrassed peoples on the Mediterranean a tolerable evening after the sultry noon. And when in good time, after long historical night, the day of new peoples dawned again and young nations in free self-fulfillment began to move towards new and higher goals, there were among them quite a few

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 270

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 271

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in which the seed strewn by Caesar had born fruit and which owed him, as they still do, the distinctive character of their nationality.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps this is the only immortality a Culture has a right to require.

Thus Spengler's philosophy of history, with its challenging intuitions and broad vistas represents an attempt at the resolution of the enigmas of existence. He clearly realized the necessity of an explicit metaphysical foundation for the apprehension of History-as-an-Intuition.

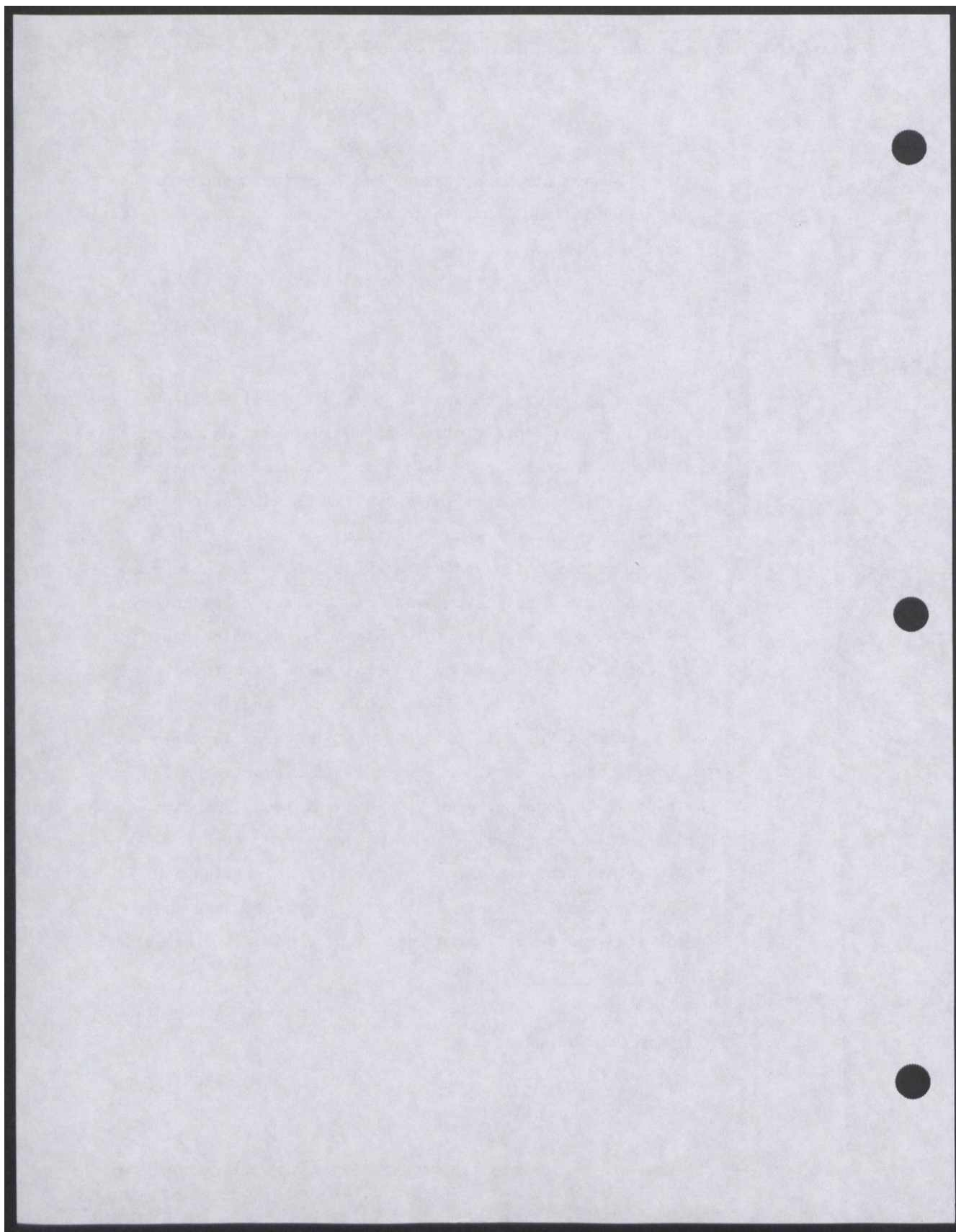
Though his philosophical assumptions do not always stand up under analytical criticism, and though alternative interpretations can be offered for some of his data, Spengler's poetic imagination pointed the way towards insights of profound and compelling beauty. The world-as-experience represents a construction which takes full cognizance of the organic factors of existence. There is considerable merit in his articulation of the two possible modes of cognition and existence, Destiny and Causality, Time and Space. The interdependence of religion and natural science constitutes a poetic vision of great depth. However, Destiny can not merely consist of vegetation and all activity implies purposes. No mere assertion of necessity can relieve

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1. Theodore Mommsen - The History of Rome - Vol. VI p. 614.  
(German edition - Verlag der Weidmannschen Buchhandlung).  
My translation.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 272

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 273

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a Culture from the responsibility giving own meaning to its own  
existence.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the tragedy of life, its content constitutes  
the creation of an individual soul, the reaction to its imman-  
ence contains the essence of personality.

Spengler thought that he had resolved this problem by  
a postulation of alternatives. But at each aspect of his phil-  
osophical exposition, this dilemma has accounted for lack of  
consistency and inability to account for a wide range of phen-  
omena. It is strange that a Transcendentalist should have found  
no deeper meaning in history than its mere manifestations.

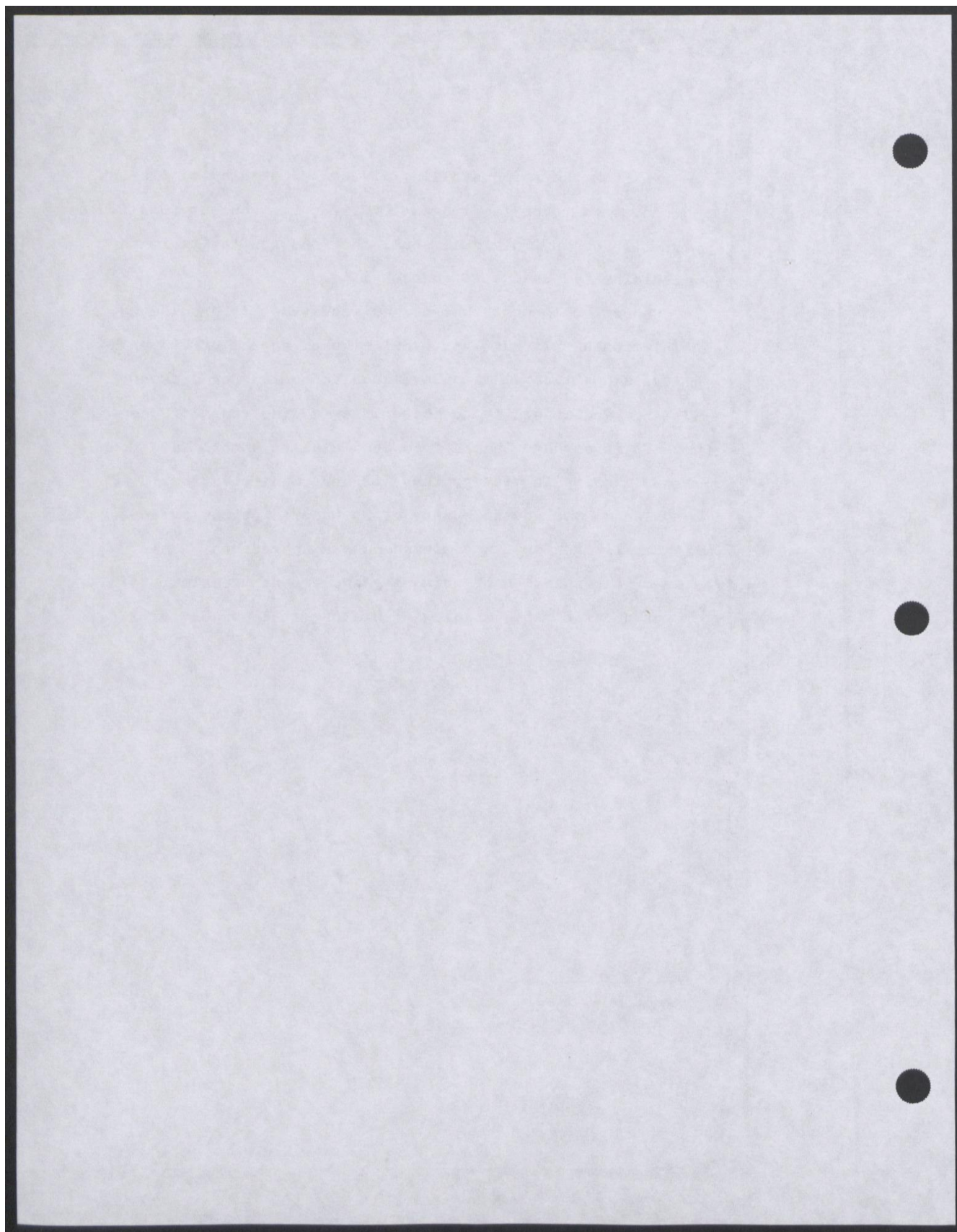
And so the poetic beauty of Spengler's psychology pre-  
sents a challenge for other minds and new approaches. The  
dilemma of the relation of necessity and freedom remains, to  
guide our quest for the meaning of history, the purpose of life.

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1. See post Ch. "The Sense of Responsibility". Also Appendix  
A "The Concept of Meaning."

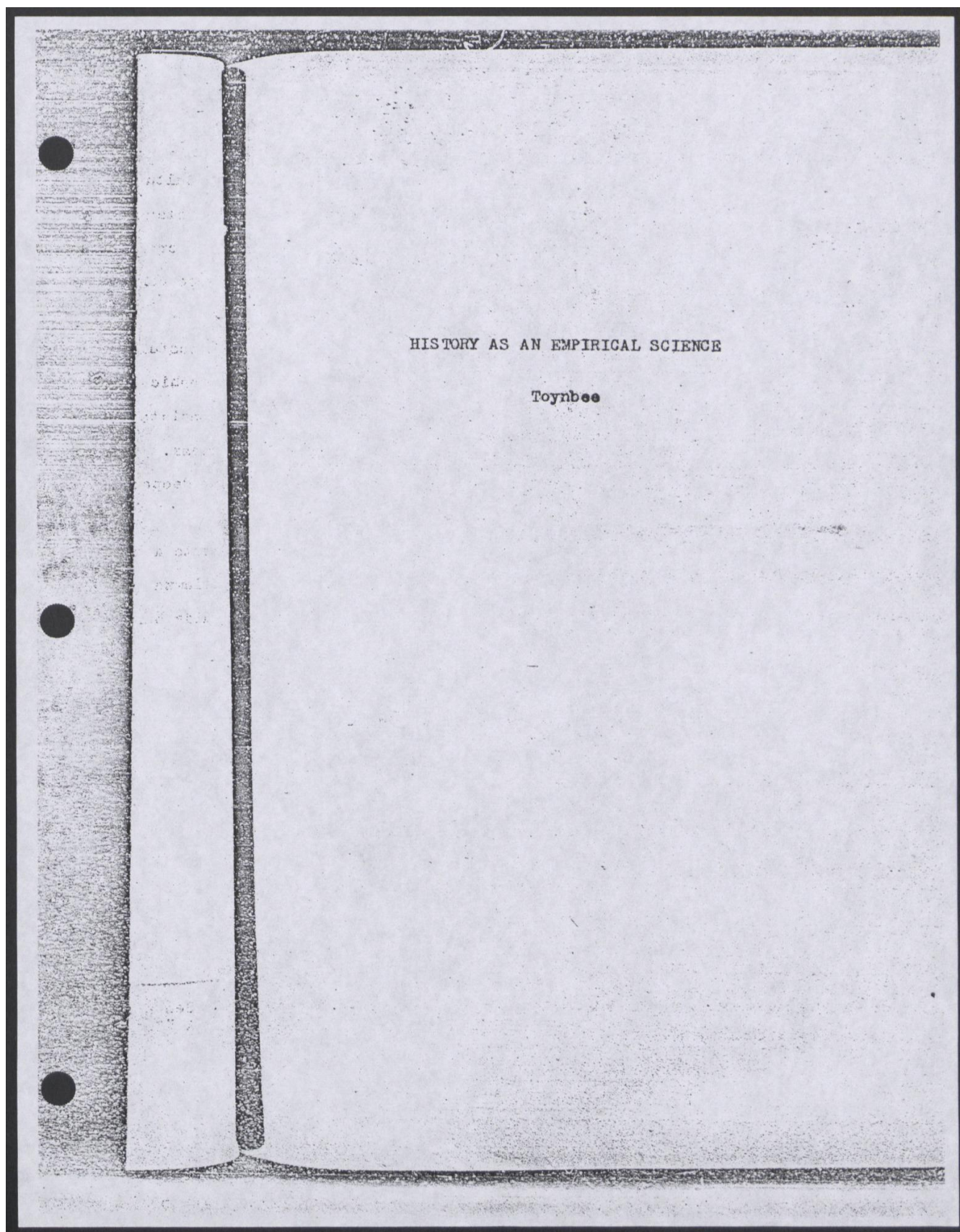
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 274

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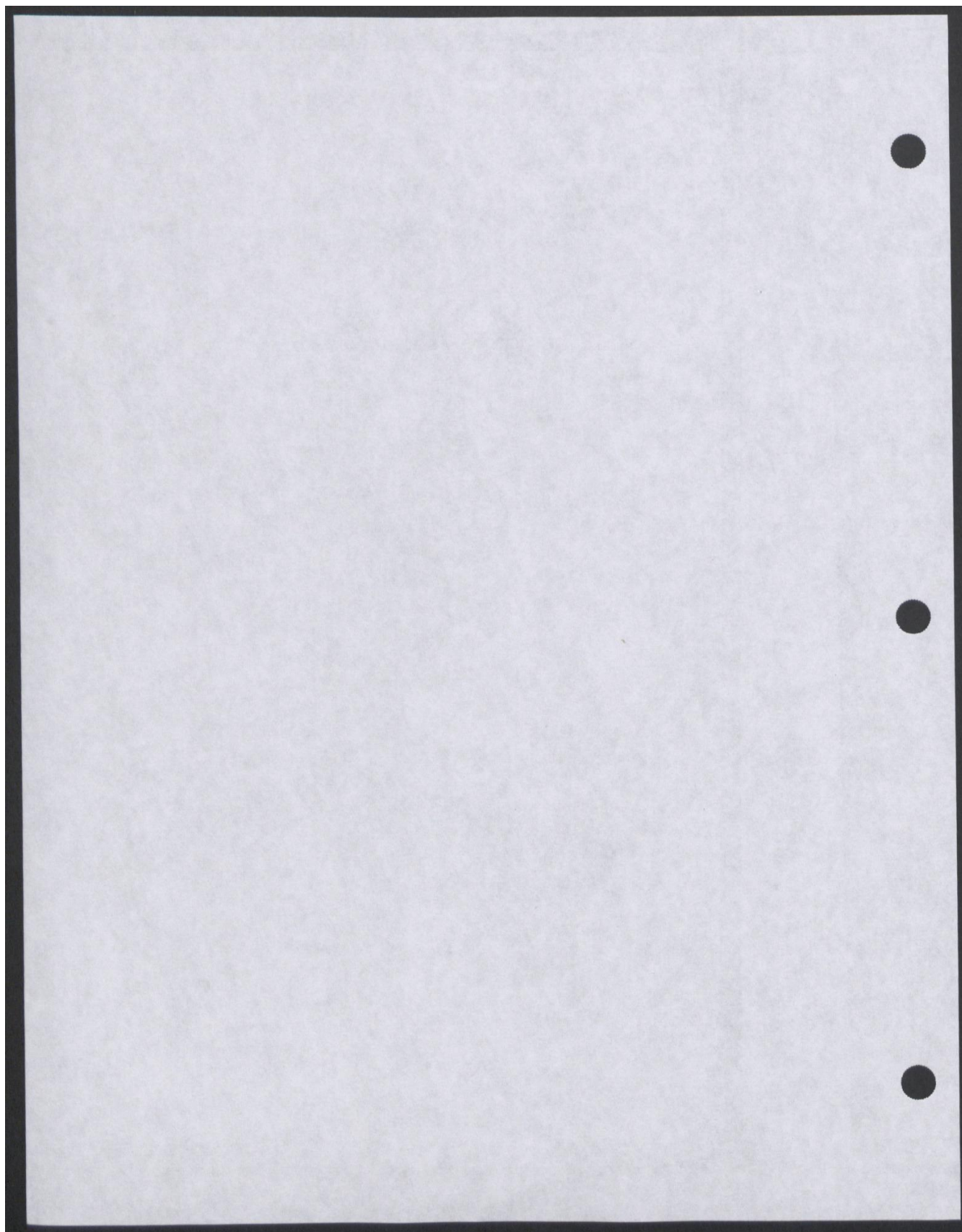
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**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 276

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### Introduction

Toynbee attempted to transcend Spengler's metaphysical limitations by an assertion of purposiveness. He argued that history did not reveal an organic process, continuously and inevitably reproducing new manifestations of power but a willed development of responsive growth, its fatality a testimony to man's failure, not to a tragedy of unavoidable death.

History, in Toynbee's scheme, exhibits a constant alternation of dynamic creativity and static torpor. The embodiments of activity are civilizations, beings of "the highest order and self-contained",<sup>1</sup> which alone constitute "intelligible fields of study."<sup>2</sup> They do not represent organic entities with determined life-spans, but merely a relation, the common field of action of their component political communities. Their life presents a succession of problems, each a challenge to undergo an ordeal. If the successful response creates an overbalance which in turn presents itself as a challenge, then the civilization grows through a dynamic rhythm of continuous problemation.

This is accomplished under the guidance of a minority which leads the uncreative majority by mimesis, a social drill, and the charm of its inspiration. Yet creativity contains its own nemesis in an idolatry of past successes and mimesis is doomed to break down because of its mechanicalness. The creative

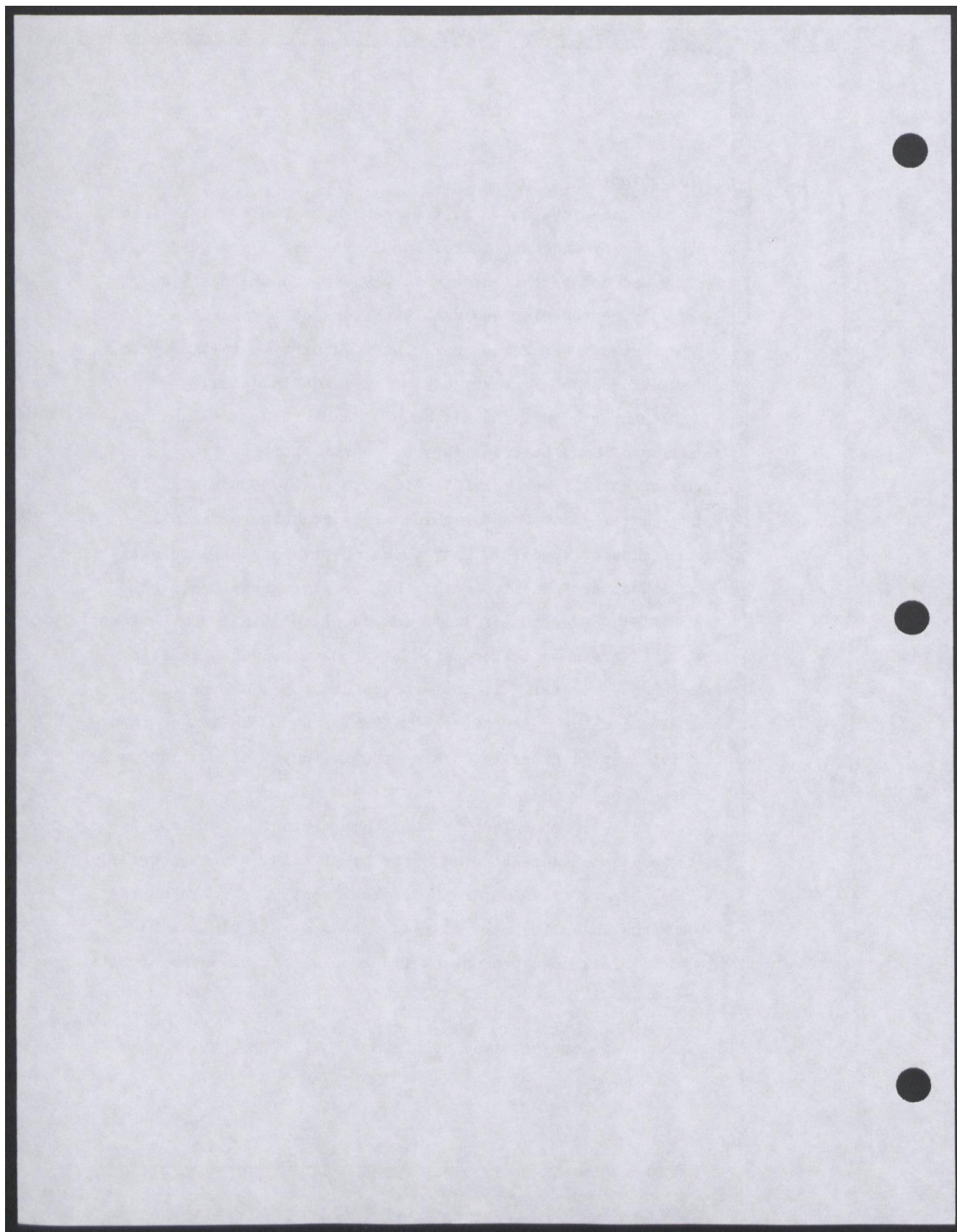
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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI. p. 45.

2. Toynbee op. cit. A Study of History Vol. I. p. 57.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 278

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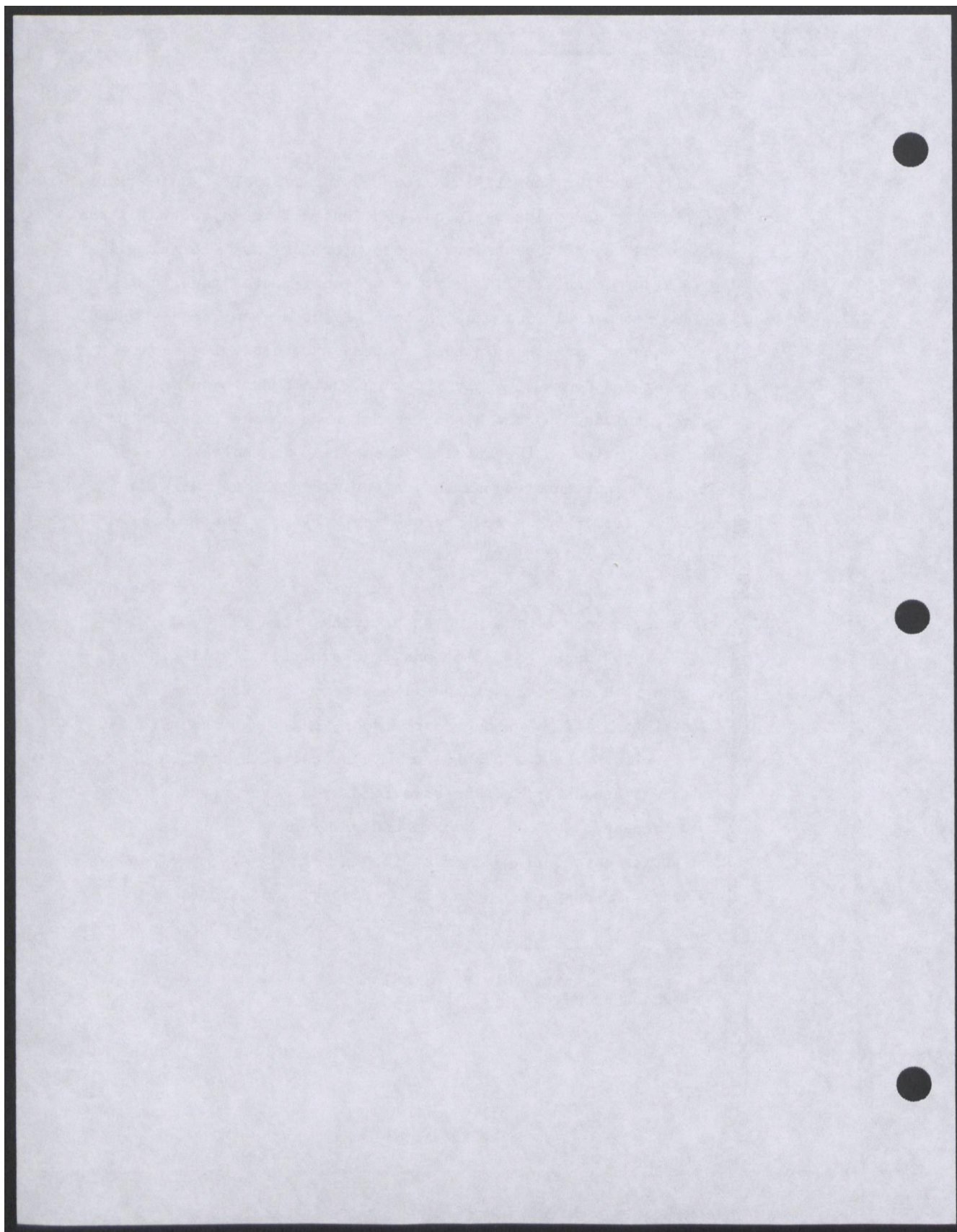
minority, sensing the rift in society, turns itself into a dominant minority and rules by force. The uncreative majority and the barbarians beyond the borders secede, forming the internal and external proletariat. The rift in the body social parallels a schism in the soul from the tensions of which a universal state appears the immediate solution. But an unsuccessful series of responses has doomed the civilization. Its inner meaning is, however, salvaged by the higher religion which the internal proletariat creates on the ruins of the collapsing universal state. After a violent interregnum the universal church becomes the chrysalis from which a new society may spring by the process of apparentation-and-affiliation.

The approach of the study which bases itself on "the well-beloved method of making an empirical survey"<sup>1</sup> leads Toynbee into inner contradictions. An empiricist will always be faced with the validation of those normative concepts, for which history offers no necessary proof, and phenomena no universal rule.<sup>2</sup> The formulation of historical laws implies a conception of necessity, not to be evaded by a mere postulation of purposiveness. Against a background of twenty-one civilizations that either have collapsed or exhibit all the symptoms of decay, challenge-and-response, with its accompanying doctrines of

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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol IV. p. 261
  2. As Kant shows.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 280

**Image ID:** 15213069



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withdrawal-and-return becomes not a negation of inevitability, but its mechanistic description. Moreover, an empirical survey has a tendency to consider mere surface phenomena as equivalent, since the inner interpretative meaning must constitute a metaphysical resolution.<sup>1</sup>

Toynbee compounds this by imposing a normative pattern on a comparative study of civilizations, all of which are conceived as philosophically contemporary and functionally equivalent. A Platonic identification of political action with appropriate types of souls results and an affirmation of a supra-mundane plane of history that embodies the true fulfillment of existence.

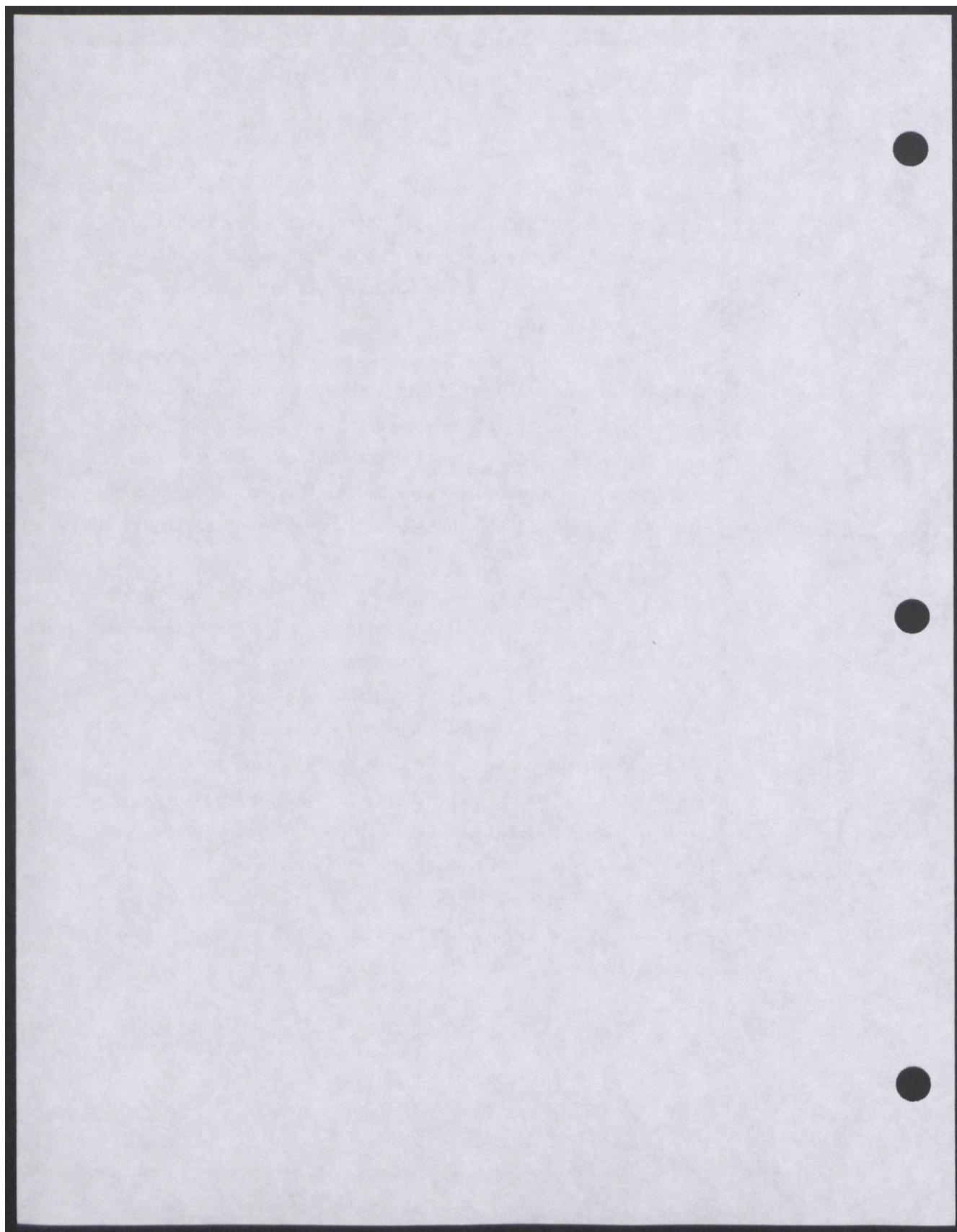
It will be our task to analyze the validity of an attempt at finding solutions to problems of inner experience in the causal manifestations of life. We must determine the degree of reality that can be ascribed to analogies from mythology or the New Testament. This will bring us face to face with our basic enigma: Does history or life exhibit a master-plan the understanding of which offers a key to the dilemmas in our souls or does the solution reside in an inner reconciliation? Must we look outside or inside ourselves for a motive force to apprehend the essence of history as a guide to action? Can a metaphysical pattern be utilized in a study that professes to find its proof in the first instance in empirical data?

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1. See post Appendix A "The Concepts of Meaning".

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<sup>1</sup>  
Metaphysics.

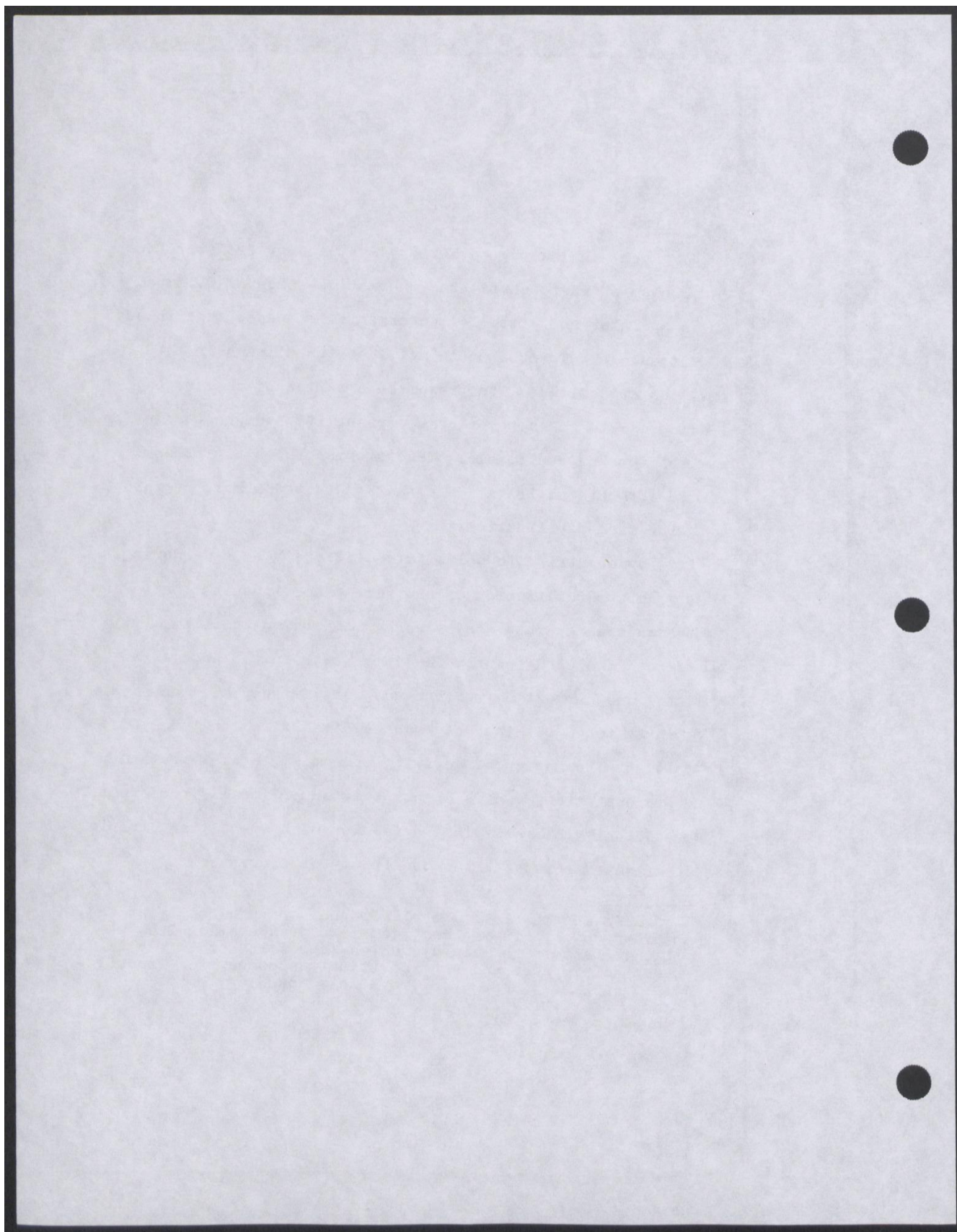
Every philosophy of history must sooner or later face the problem of what constitutes the motive-force of directed life. Spengler had opted for an organic immanence that ruled all happenings. Toynbee could not face the dilemma in this form. He argued that life presented a series of challenges, the response to which revealed a personality and whose solution was therefore unpredictable. Yet this assertion of freedom clashed with his empirical data that indicated almost certain decay for each civilization.

Toynbee tried to solve this difficulty by considering history as the realization of a divine plan, in which "the seeds sown are separate seeds, each with its own destiny, but all of one kind, and sown by the same Sower in the hope of attaining one harvest."<sup>2</sup> Growth and decay merely hide an underlying unity through which God reveals Himself to mankind. Life presents an alternation of activity and decay, of integration and differentiation. While events seem superficially recurrent, history actually operates in the fashion of a wheel, the circular motion of which serves as the condition for progress.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Toynbee's metaphysical doctrine is nowhere explicitly stated. In order to give it the most complete presentation I have utilized Dante's philosophy, which seems closest to the implied concept of Toynbee and applied it to the concept of Transfiguration which is the key of Toynbee's cosmology.
  2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. III. p. 385.
  3. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. IV. p. 34

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 284

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The disintegration of civilizations merely exhibits the condition for a higher experience, for the vision of the supra-mundane reality which is of and beyond this world, the City of God, which emerges out of the ashes of the human City of Destruction.<sup>1</sup>

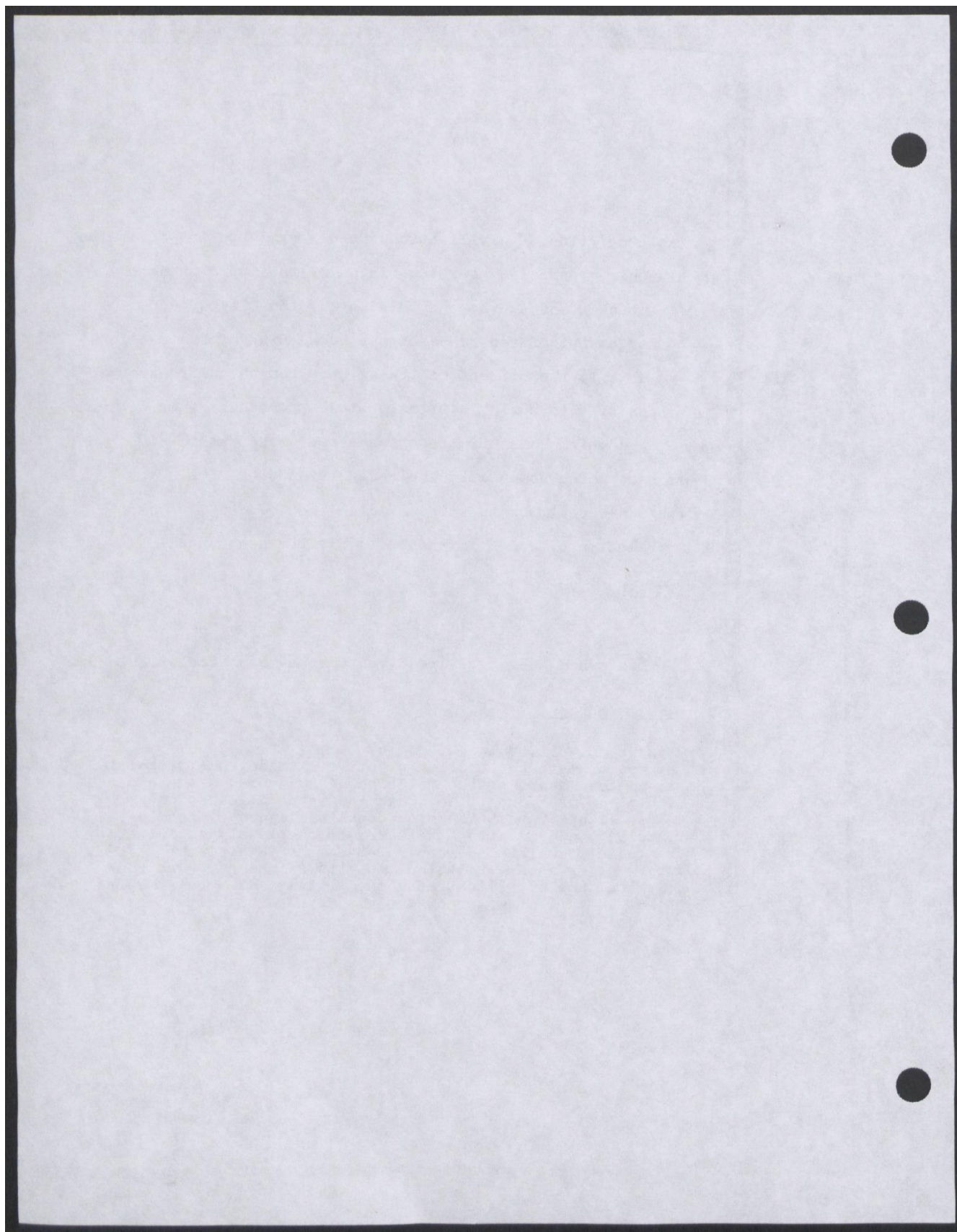
This is the concept of transfiguration which transforms the events of this world into incidental appearances in a divine scheme, and which considers true peace that inner state of blessedness which comes with the recognition of limits. Yet how can God's realm be in this world and not be of it? What<sup>2</sup> is the relation of God's immanence to His transcendence.

Dante has poetically resolved the philosophical problems

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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI. p. 167
  2. Toynbee answers the problem with two similes, one geometrical on the nature of the relation of a square to the side of a plane of a cube, the other geographical based on a temporal superimposition of successive layers of settlements on the same site. Neither are completely satisfactory. The geometrical simile merely proves the feasibility of constructing such a relation, not its existence. The geographical analogy illustrates the truism that every physical object is part of a larger whole. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI. p. 159-162.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 286

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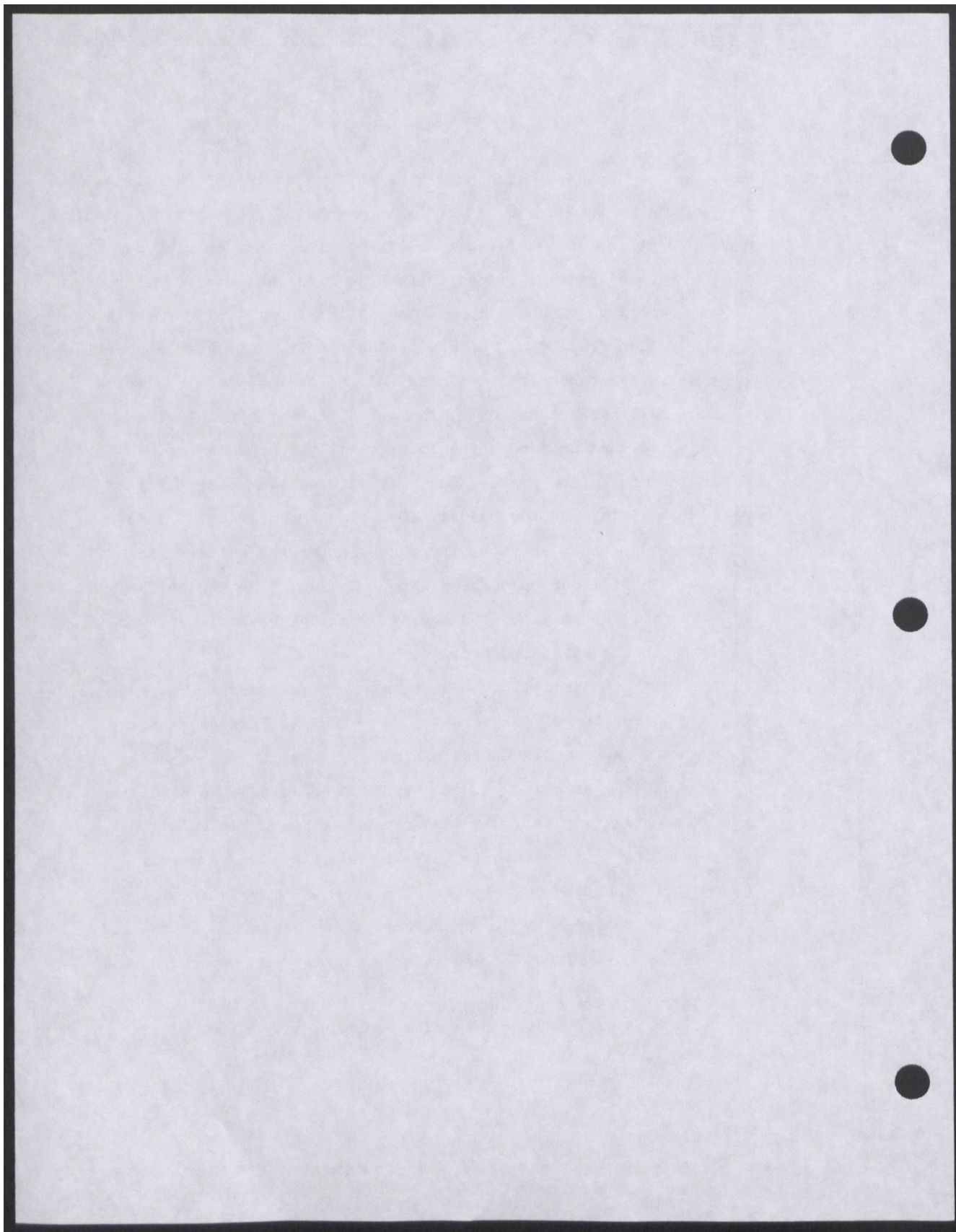
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<sup>1</sup>  
raised by Toynbee. Man participates in a divine plan and in-  
sofar as he is God's creature is incapable of greater perfection.  
The cognition of the first intelligence (self-evidence of cer-  
tain axioms) and the affection for the first objects of desire  
(the pure love of God) express the divine imprint. But Man is  
also fallen from Eden. He has tasted the fruit of good and evil,  
a sin both because of its timing and the overstepping of limits.  
Man's fall has been so deep, the corruption of his nature so  
extensive that unaided he would be totally incapable of trans-  
cending his fallen state. Humanity attains the possibility of  
Grace only through the majesty of Christ's sacrifice. It's  
existence reveals an unceasing struggle for the self-realiza-  
tion of a Will corrupted by desire. Reason, "the virtue that  
counsels",<sup>2</sup> constitutes the agency by which the will is deter-  
mined into its proper direction.

The potentiality to love God expresses Man's true essence,  
the misdirection of this feeling contains the fatedness of ex-  
istence. Inward blessedness exhibits the reflection of God's  
love and that of all true believers and serves as the condition  
for immortality. Yet this love can not achieve the full impli-  
cations of its immanence in the mundane sphere or by merely  
rational conditions. Only Paradise sees the complete union of  
Will, Desire and Reason. There everything coalesces in the all-  
embracing Love of God. This is true meaning of Piccarda Donati<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. It must be repeated that this represents my construction  
of the spirit of Toynbee's metaphysics.
  2. Dante - Purgatory - Canto 18.
  3. Dante - Paradiso - Canto 3.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 288  
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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 289

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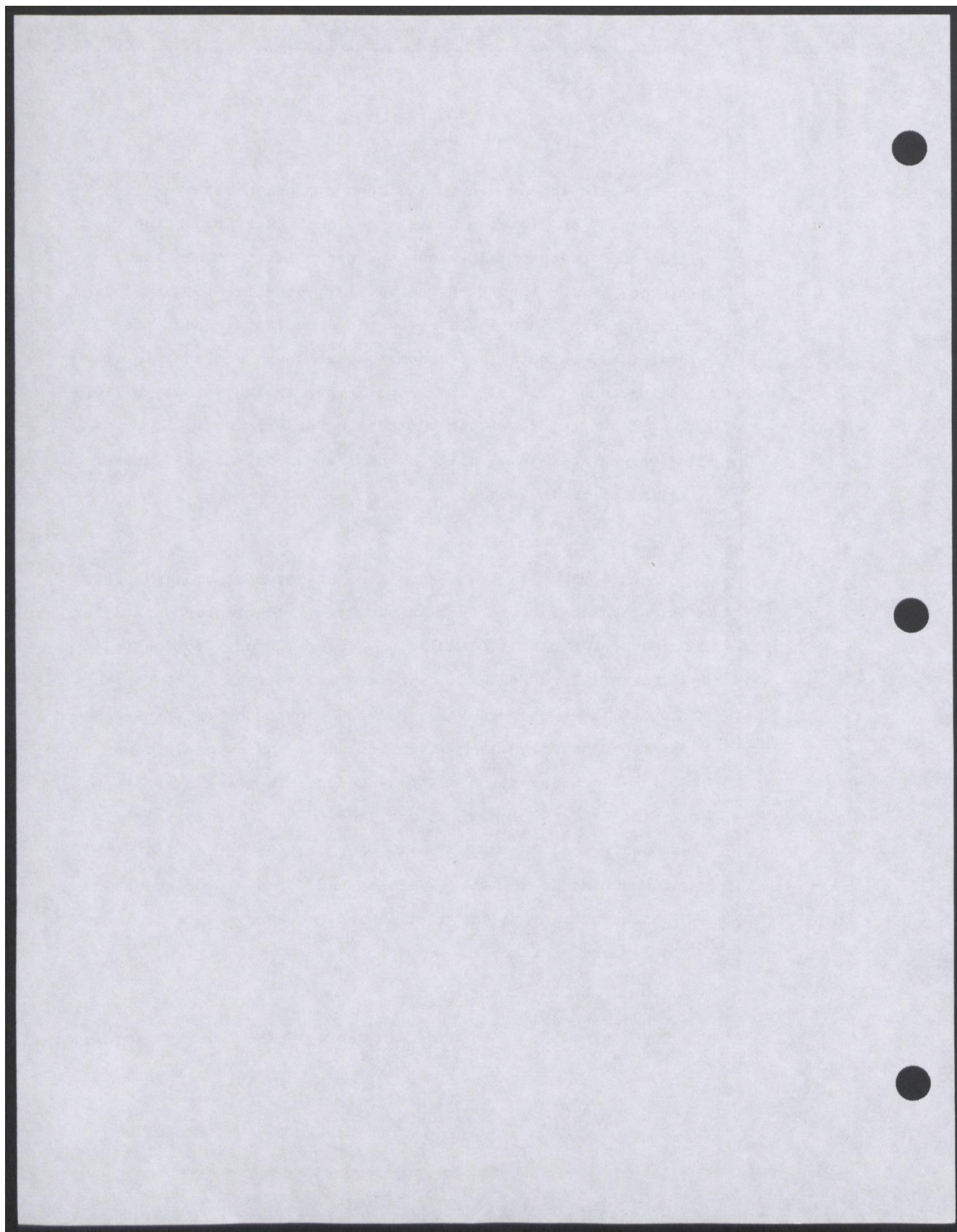
whose symbolic appearance in the Moon expresses both Volition and Necessity and to whom Dante's rational query regarding the justice of degrees of bliss appears essentially meaningless. That, too, is the import of the ability, peculiar to the blessed, of reading each other's thoughts. In Paradise, indeed, the "virtue that counsels" has become superfluous, at least in its directing connotations. Knowledge is now instantaneous, belief no longer subject to either buttressing or argument. Everything merges in a total unity brought about by the radiance of an all-illuminating Grace.

This exhibits the assumptions of Toynbee's metaphysical doctrine, which suffers from an overly utilitarian argumentation and a lack of explicit formulation. God's love, identical with that of Man's love for Him, expressed in the feeling of brotherhood constitutes the condition for the experience of transfiguration, the connecting link between mundane and supra-mundane reality.<sup>1</sup> The conception of transcendence is given symbolic expression by Christianity in God, the father, the aspect of immanence in God, the Holy Ghost. Christ, the Son of God, who sacrificed himself to attain blessedness for his own, represents the connecting link to the human heart, however great the logical difficulty reason finds in the Trinity.<sup>2</sup>

1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI p. 164 though it must be said that Toynbee can do no better than derive God's love by a syllogism.
2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI. p. 162.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 290

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 291

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His metaphysics enable Toynbee to impose a normative pattern on historical events. He validates the attitudes towards life which characterize a disintegrating civilization in terms of Christian theology.<sup>1</sup> For this reason the Stoics' philosophy of Detachment violates the imperative of the brotherhood of Man based on God's love.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Socrates' death loses meaning since it represented a futile reaction to the schism in the Hellenic soul and attempted to transfer its field of action forward on a merely mundane plane. This, too, explains the moral sanction implicit in such statements as the "criminality of militarism",<sup>3</sup> the "greater treasure rejected by the Jews",<sup>4</sup> whose inability to accept Christ doomed their civilization.

Toynbee's metaphysical assumptions permeate his concept of a culture's growth. Primitive humanity represents a Yin state of integration, the condition precedent to a further advance in the divine scheme of things. The creative minority contains the Saints, in whose soul a spark of the divine has kindled a response and who constitute the "virtue that counsels" in Dante's terms towards the uninspired majority. Man's fall from Grace has resulted in that perversity of human nature which prevents direct illumination, forcing recourse to a mimesis doomed by its mechanicalness.<sup>5</sup> At the end of this development

1. See Post.

2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. VI. p. 132.

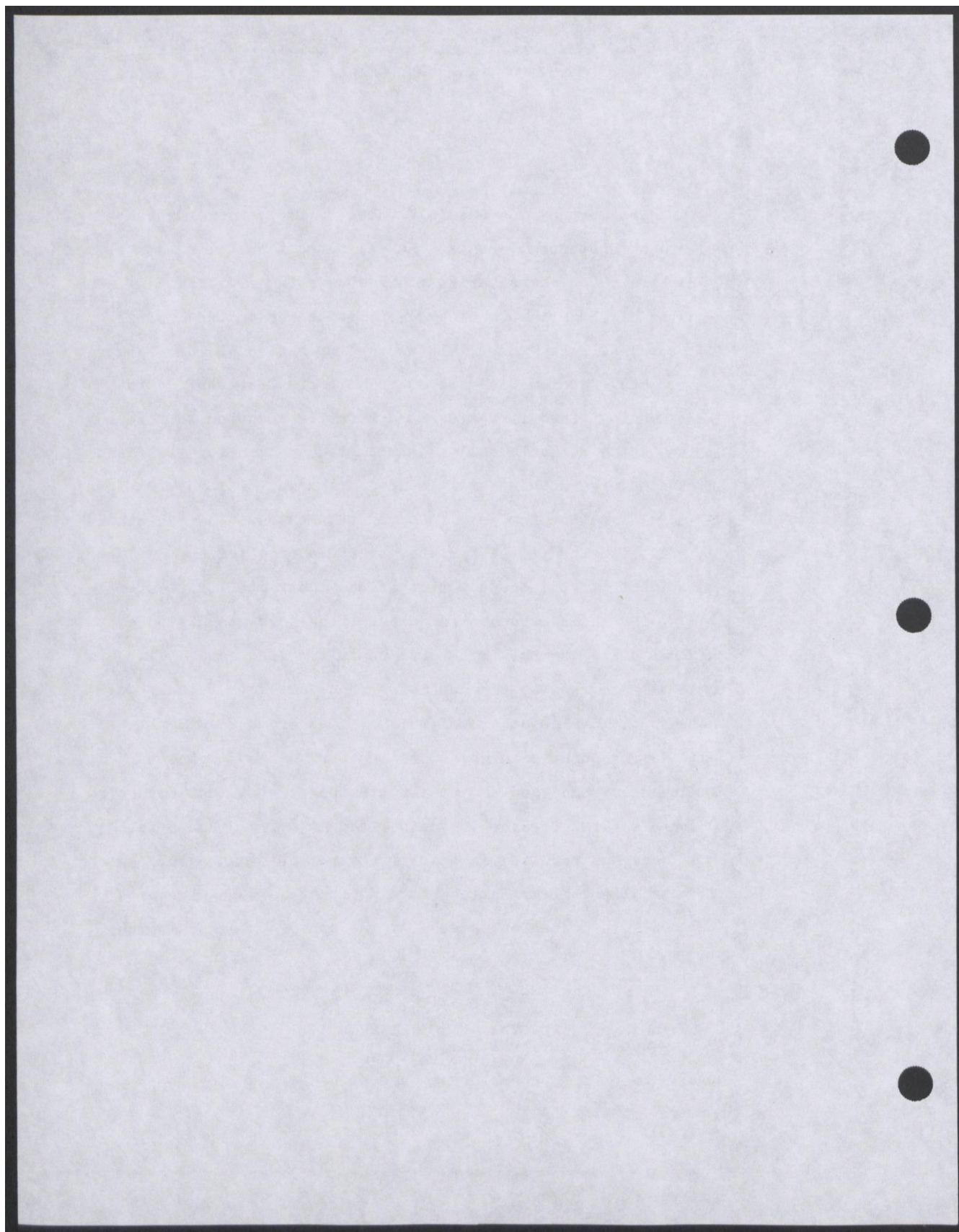
3. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. IV.

4. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. IV. p. 243

5. See post for further dependence on Dante.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 292

**Image ID:** 15213081



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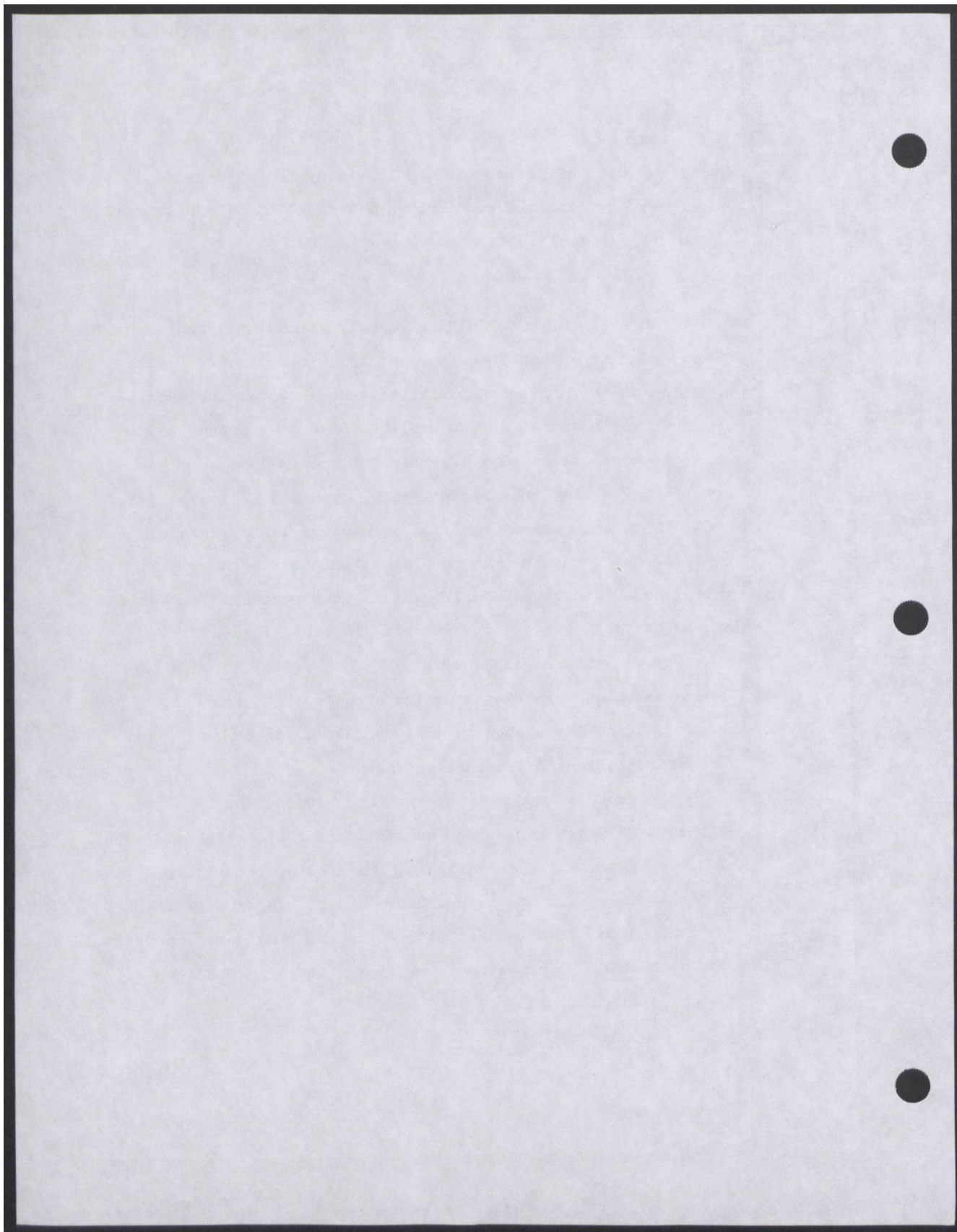
stands the City of Destruction, a testimony to Man's present inadequacy but also a token through its creation of a universal church of potential fulfillment.

Toynbee, however, did not merely attempt to probe deeper layers of meaning than Spengler, but conceived himself in the tradition of the British Empiricists. He asserted that History revealed its immanence to the application of the proper methodology, to the patient classification of data. Such an approach however, is totally inconsistent with Toynbee's philosophical basis. A mere empirical analysis of history is impossible,<sup>1</sup> the regularity observed in phenomena constituting a metaphysical assumption of order. An empiricist is unable to find purposiveness in history, since all regularity implies at least the necessity of constant conjunction.<sup>2</sup> A historical "law" always denies the unique experience or the creative act, reducing both to agents of an inexorability that constantly produces new surface manifestations of success and power.

For success constitutes the final lesson that historical phenomena teach Man. Each accomplished fact, each surviving political organization testifies to a method of prevailing, represents an answer to the pragmatic query: "What works?" A mere collection of historical data - though it can never be constructed free from the metaphysical postulation inherent in

- 
1. See post "The Concepts of Meaning".
  2. Hume - An Enquiry on Human Understanding.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 294  
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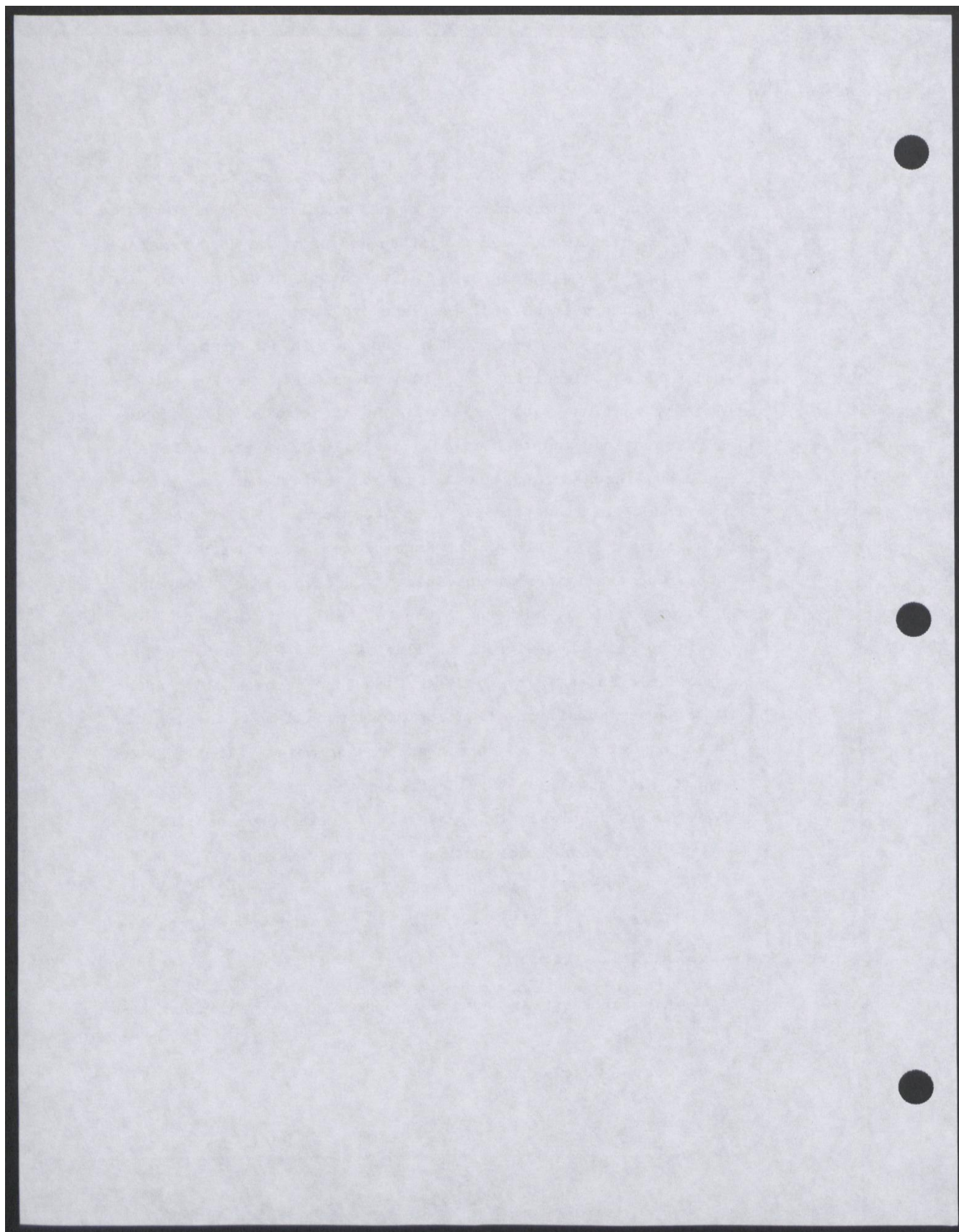
selectivity - will always represent a negation of freedom and an assertion of determinism. The alternatives that accompanied the willed performance are forgotten and only the deed remains a testimony to its fatedness. Failure constitutes the only sin known to history in an empirical and pragmatic approach.

Toynbee, however, does not succeed in constructing an edifice based on empirical considerations. His conclusions are precisely what one would expect in the light of his philosophical assumptions and theological convictions. A pragmatist should have been careful about a method that yields an answer so obviously in line with his preconceptions.<sup>1</sup> Nobody better illustrates the nemesis of the "ego-centric delusion,"<sup>2</sup> than Toynbee who castigates it so violently. Love is not immanent in historical data, but constitutes a resolve of the soul. History is not a book designed to illustrate the New Testament, nor do Christ's sayings embody truisms for "successful" conduct. But the superimposition of an empirical method on a theological foundation, with data conceived as proving moral validity instead of the postulates deriving from a transcendental experience<sup>3</sup> yields precisely this result. It never becomes clear whether the Pharisees are condemned because of their failure to recognize Christ's moral superiority or because of their lack of political perspicacity in failing to respond properly to the

1. Particularly as Toynbee refuses to accept the Race Theory of Material Progress because it fits in with preconceptions of age.
2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 153.
3. See post - Conclusions.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 296

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wave of the future. Similarly Toynbee sways uneasily between rejecting militarism for its ethical deficiency or its "suicid-<sup>1</sup>alness."

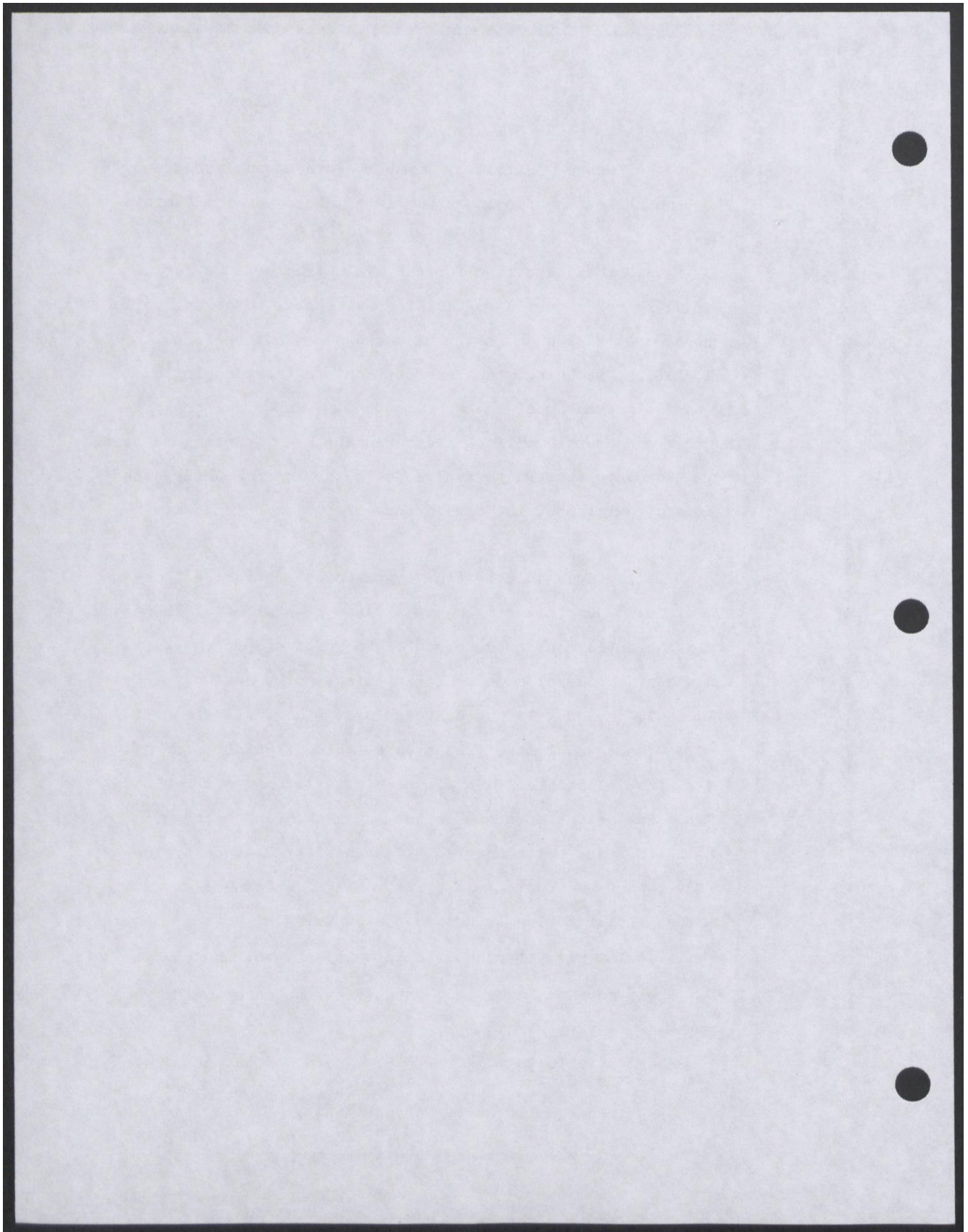
A normative pattern for the evaluation of laws derived empirically represents a logical inconsistency.<sup>2</sup> The connection between moral action and material success can not be found in manipulatory, technical laws and led Kant to the postulation of God as the guarantor of the summum bonum.<sup>3</sup> Empirical analysis compares phenomenal manifestations and seeks a recurring pattern. Value judgments concern themselves with the inner meaning, the noumena of existence, the consequence of our experience of freedom.

It is impossible to find a guarantee for the realization of religious faith in the appearance of historical phenomena. Such a guarantee would reduce ethics to rules of prudence.<sup>4</sup> A violator of the moral code would in this view be not a knave, but a fool. Freedom is not achieved by the mere assertion of a purposiveness that itself becomes but a manifestation of historical law, classifiable as a mechanistic technique for blessedness. The salvation of souls and the growth and decay of civilizations are not connected by a causality denoted by immediate reward and punishment. The wheel of existence may utilize its circular motion to progress along virgin ground. Yet no civilization has yet succeeded in this endeavor and decay has marked their advance, even in Toynbee's terms. And so the very

1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. IV. p. 365. See also post conclusions.
2. See post for Criterion (Appendix A).
3. See post. Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality. (Kant)
4. See post. Ch. The Sense of Responsibility.

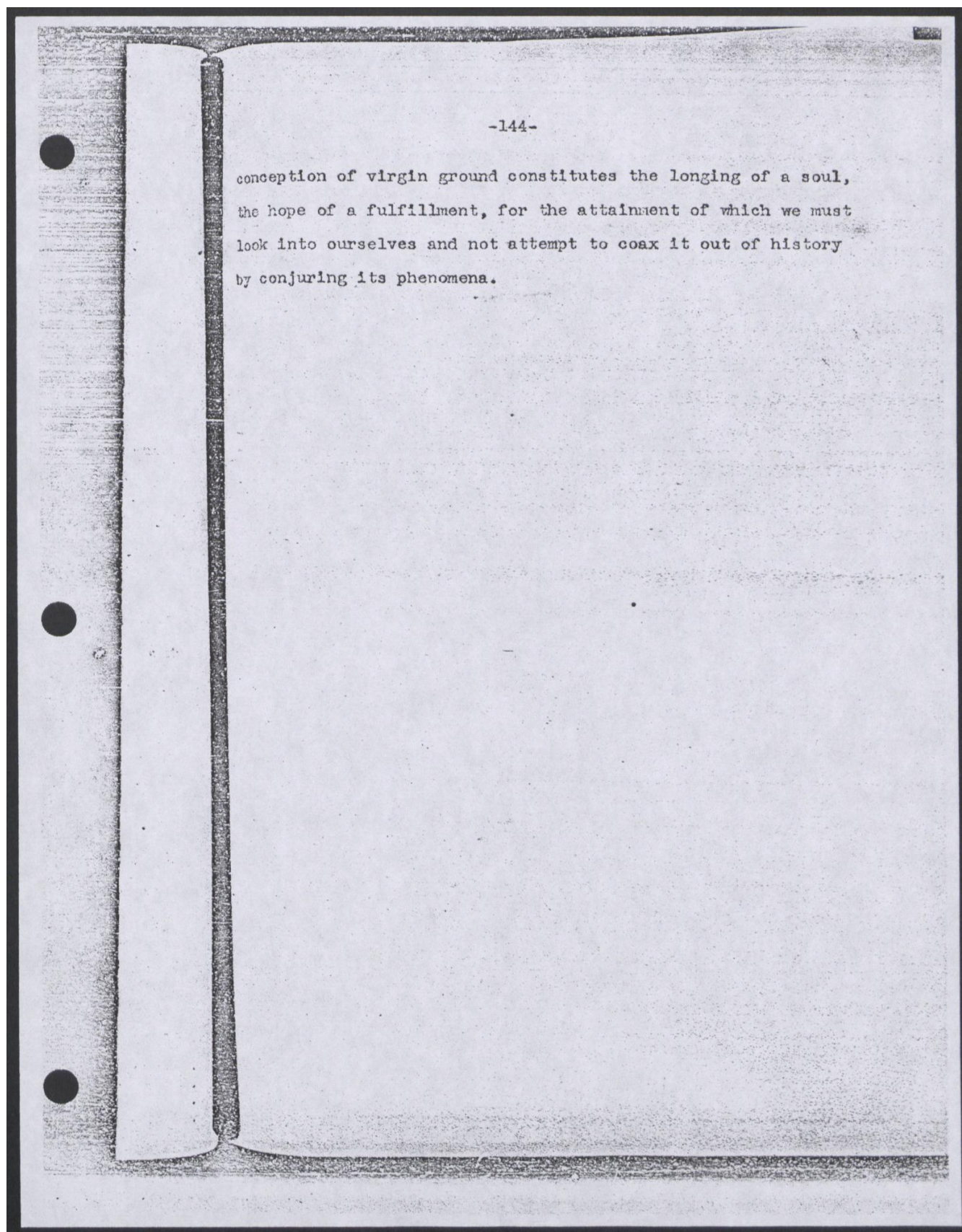
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 298

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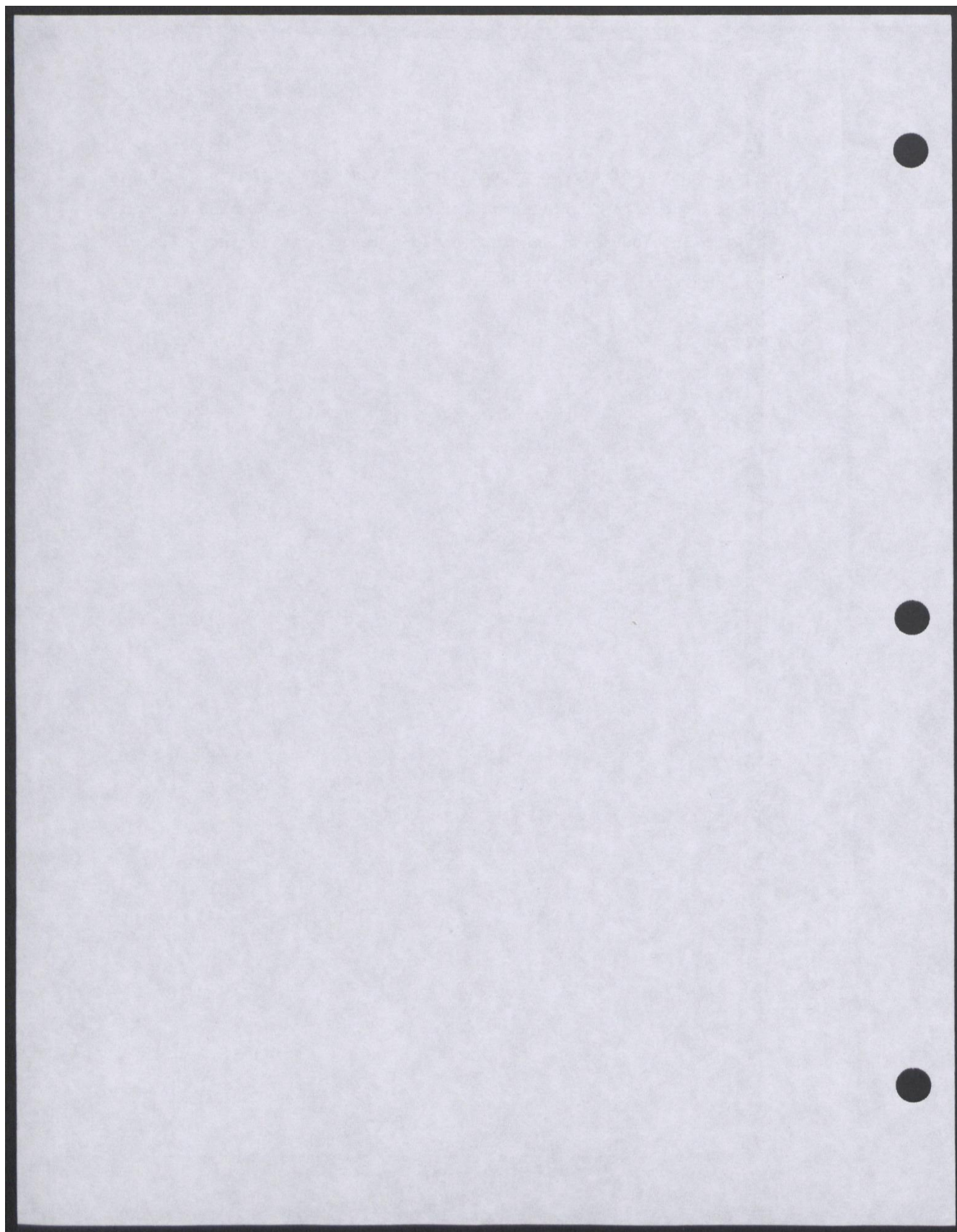
**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 299

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**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 300

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 301

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### The Nature and Genesis of Civilizations

Two strands of thought can be distinguished in Toynbee's philosophy. The biological approach regards history as an evolutionary process, its recurrence of growth and decay a testimony to Man's efforts to turn himself into Superman. This view dominates Toynbee's analysis of the genesis of civilizations and their growth. The theological conception sees in history the realization of a divine plan to teach man the essential meaninglessness of temporal success. All typical attitudes towards life fail, save the recognition of the supra-mundane plane of reality which denies the substantiality of all wordly endeavor. This is the tendency of Toynbee's analysis of the breakdown of civilizations and their disintegration.

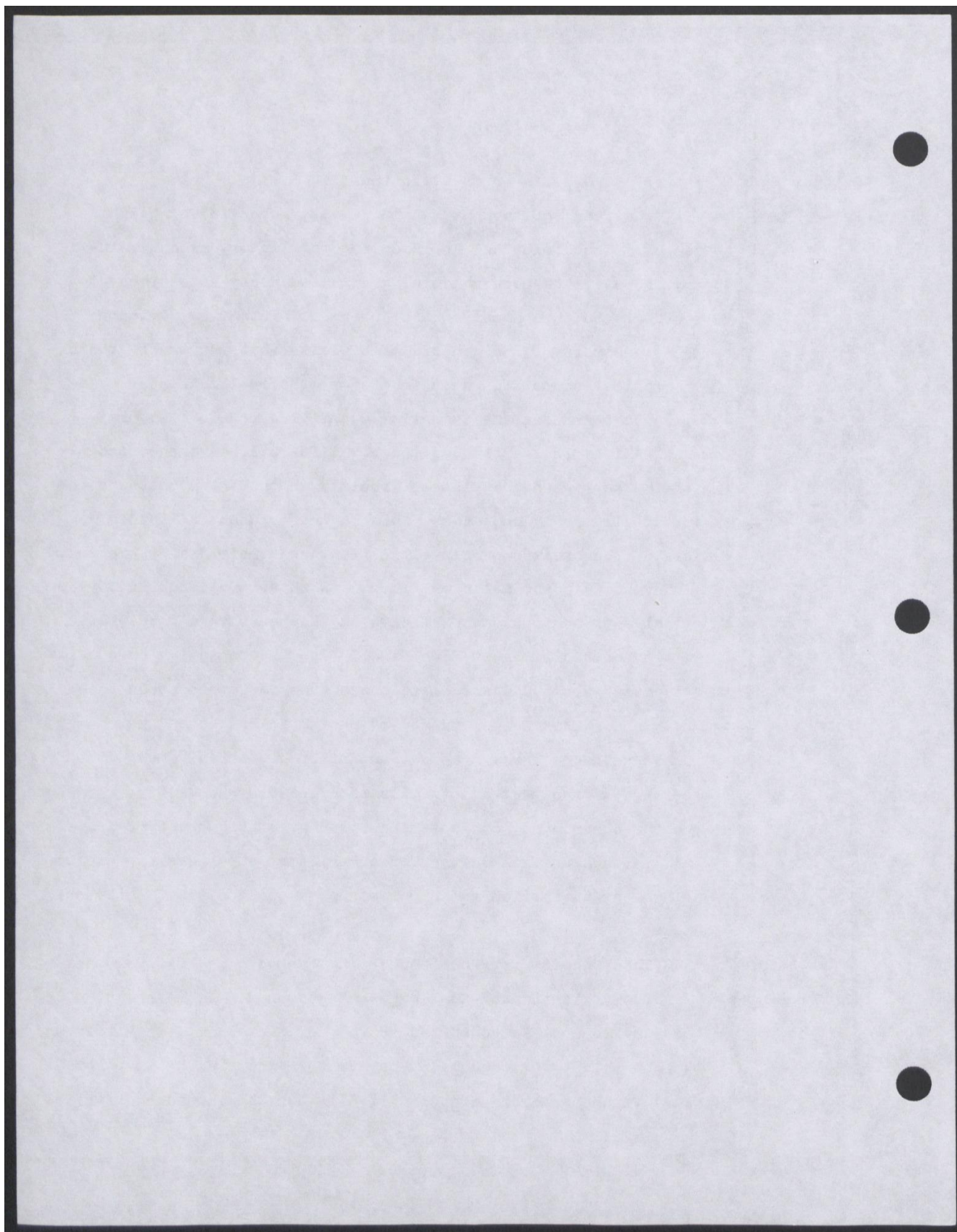
Toynbee's postulation of freedom is therefore deceptive. The biological approach reduces Challenge-and-Response to a mechanistic description of the immanent Elan Vital. The theological view considers purposiveness merely God's tool to teach man his impotence on the mundane plane. This is compounded by the empirical method which moves with great patience through a vast amount of historical data. But data belongs to the past and is therefore ruled by necessity. Freedom, on the other hand, can not be derived as attribute of reality but only through an inward experience. History's purpose represents a metaphysical assumption not a necessary conclusion from historical events.<sup>1</sup>

This becomes very noticeable in Toynbee's analysis of the Genesis of civilizations. Challenge-and-Response, the interaction of Race and Environment is conceived as the key factor in a civilization's birth. But this theory becomes a meaningful assertion of purposiveness only if the analysis concerns itself with the imponderability of

<sup>1</sup> See post Ch. History and Man's Experience of Morality (Kent)

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 302

**Image ID:** 15213091



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the response. This is precisely what an empirical method can not do, however. Its chief concern is not the uniqueness of the response but the generality of the challenge. Toynbee carefully classifies all possible challenges, conceived as qualitatively equivalent and varying only in intensity. This, however, reduces Challenge-and-Response to but a restatement of the Environment theory.<sup>1</sup> These are the problems raised by this phase of "The Study of History."

Toynbee's philosophy of history begins with a query: What are the smallest meaningful entities which a historian may study? An examination of England's past leads Toynbee to the conclusion that every nation belongs to a larger unit which sets the frame-work for its endeavors. Consequently civilizations, not states, are the social atoms with which a philosophy of history must concern itself. For this reason, too, relations between states have a completely different import than contacts among civilizations. Relations between states represent the mechanism of a Society's growth. Contacts among civilizations reveal the process of apparentation-and-affiliation by which new civilizations rise on the ruins of the old. Toynbee distinguishes only two completely independent civilizations among his twenty-one specimen.<sup>2</sup>

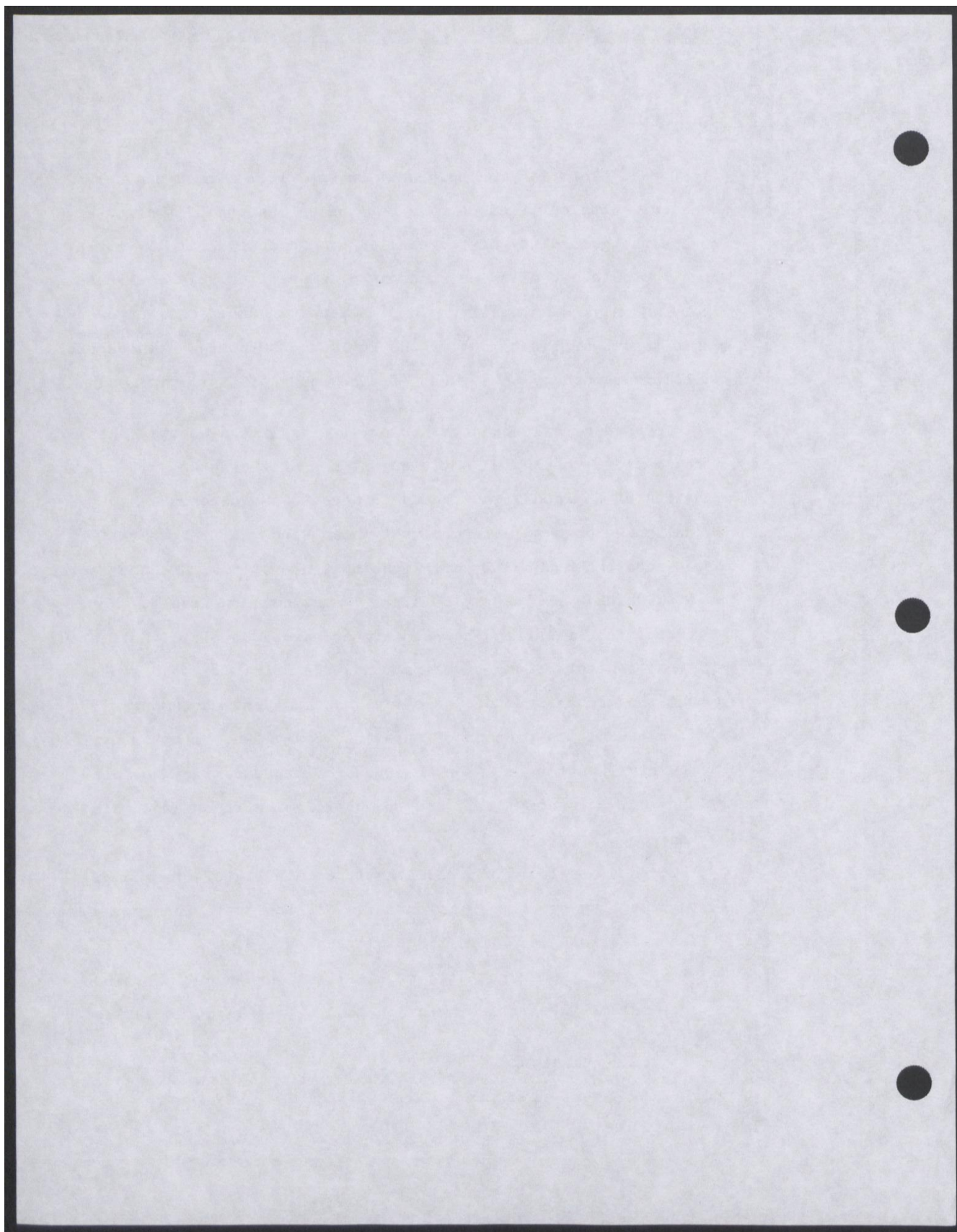
Toynbee considers the civilizations intelligible fields of study because they are the representatives of the evolutionary rhythm that premeats existence. Here his biological approach comes to full expression. The dynamic activity of civilizations is but a prelude to a new level of integration which in good time will serve as the

1. See post "Conclusions".

2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 131- The Egyptian and the Andean civilizations are the unrelated civilizations.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 304

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 305

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jumping off point for a fresh advance. Their common task serves as the condition for the comparability of civilizations. For this reason, Toynbee rejects the view that any one civilization can represent an ultimate stage of development. This assumption derives from the ego-centric delusion which equates the influence of a civilization in its growth phase with the total meaning of history. It reflects an attitude which considers its point of observation as normative instead of accidental, a method discarded by the physical sciences since the Copernican revolution.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the integration of the world into a Western pattern is confined to the economic and perhaps the political plane. The contributions of the Syriac civilization to Western ideation, the edifice of Chinese philosophy, the profundity of Sumeric astronomy all testify to levels of achievement which make the attribution of ultimacy to any one civilization meaningless.

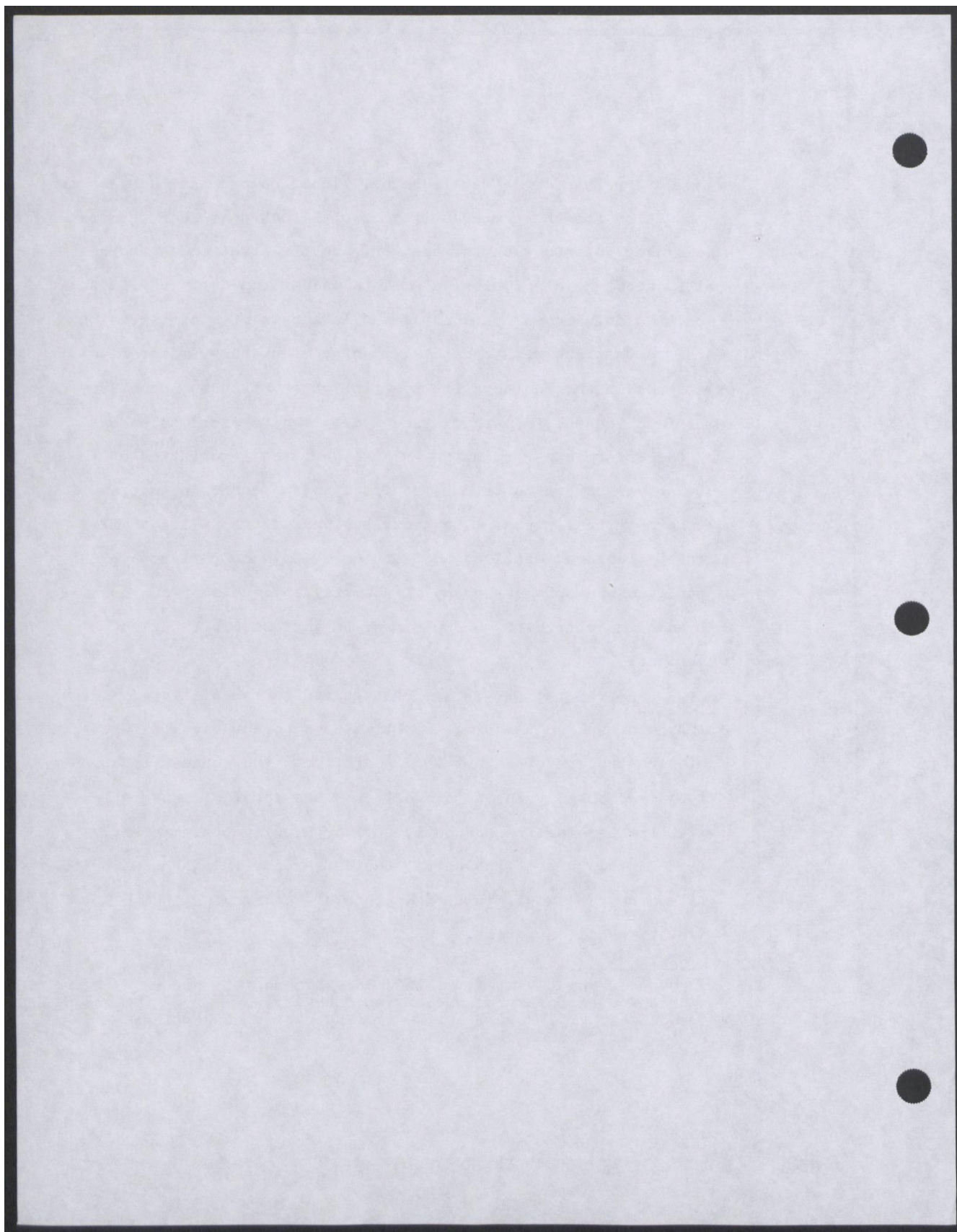
Toynbee therefore disagrees with the periodization of history into ancient, medieval and modern. Civilizations do not reveal stages of an uninterrupted progress but a common effort, the success of which can be judged only by the attainment of a new level of integration. All civilizations are consequently philosophically contemporary. Compared to the life of the earth, the difference in age between civilizations becomes negligible, the youth of the species in term of its own time-scale apparent.<sup>2</sup>

1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 160. See obvious reliance on Kant and even more pronouncedly on Spengler.

2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 17 (For Toynbee's assumptions as to the age span of the earth.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 306

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The uncertainty about the outcome of the evolutionary process prevents an evaluation of the intrinsic merit of civilizations.<sup>1</sup> This is compounded by the insignificance of any achievement compared to the common goal.<sup>2</sup> Toynbee utilizes the analogy of a one-way street to illustrate the philosophical equivalence of civilizations. The direction of the street forces dynamic activity and prevents reversing or even stopping the vehicle. Nevertheless none of the twenty-one civilizations which have entered the thorough-fare has succeeded in passing out by the further exit. Fourteen have reversed in violation of the rule and seven exhibit various stages of breakdown.<sup>3</sup> The furthest points of penetration lie so close together that an evaluation either absolutely, or in terms of distance from the exit, becomes a philosophical impossibility.

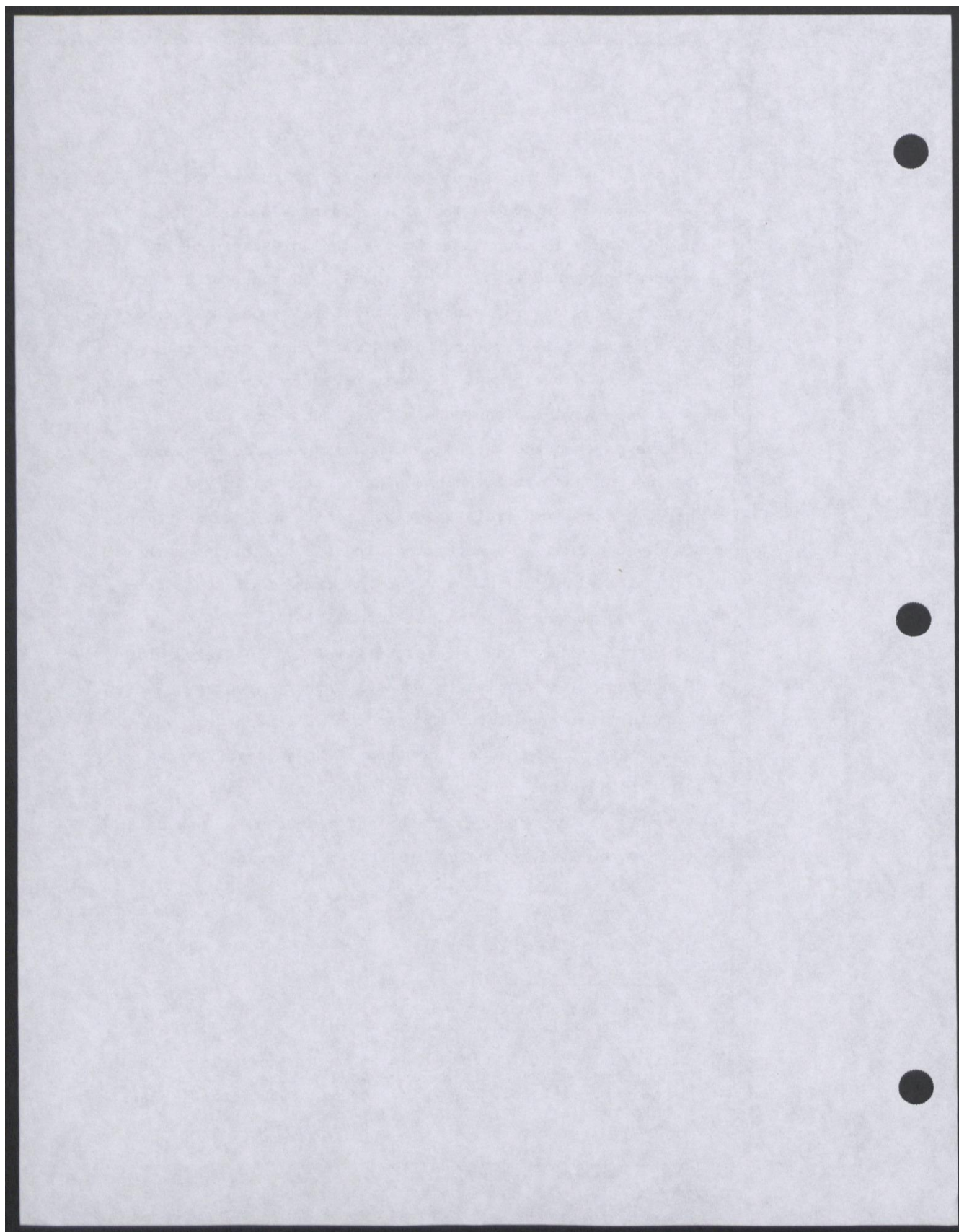
Civilizations thus represent intelligible fields of study and genl of a species in an evolutionary process. Their relation in time constitutes an aspect of the deepening of religious ideation,<sup>4</sup> but does not result in successive stages of a uniform advance. They are philosophically equivalent, functionally contemporary and allow a comparison for the determination of the laws governing historical processes.

If the civilizations represent genl of a new species,

1. This statement from Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 175 is in flat contradiction with the whole tendency of Vol. V and Vol. VI. See conclusion for discussion.
2. This assumes that Toynbee is aware of the goal and presents another inconsistency in an empirical scheme.
3. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 176 see also post for discussion of this inconsistency.
4. See post.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 308

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what accounts for their genesis? Toynbee endeavors to locate a principle which distinguishes primitive societies and civilizations in order to find a clue for the solution of this problem. He rejects the view that the possession of institutions, or the articulation of the division of labour, can serve as a criterion. These occur in very elaborate form in all types of historical existence. Toynbee finds the distinguishing feature in mimesis, a generic feature of social life, defined as "the acquisition through imitation of social assets which the acquirers have not originated for themselves and which they might never have come to possess if they had not encountered and imitated other people in whose possession these assets were to be found."<sup>1</sup> Mimesis is a social drill, its direction towards the past characteristic of primitive societies, its utilization for new creativity the mark of civilizations.

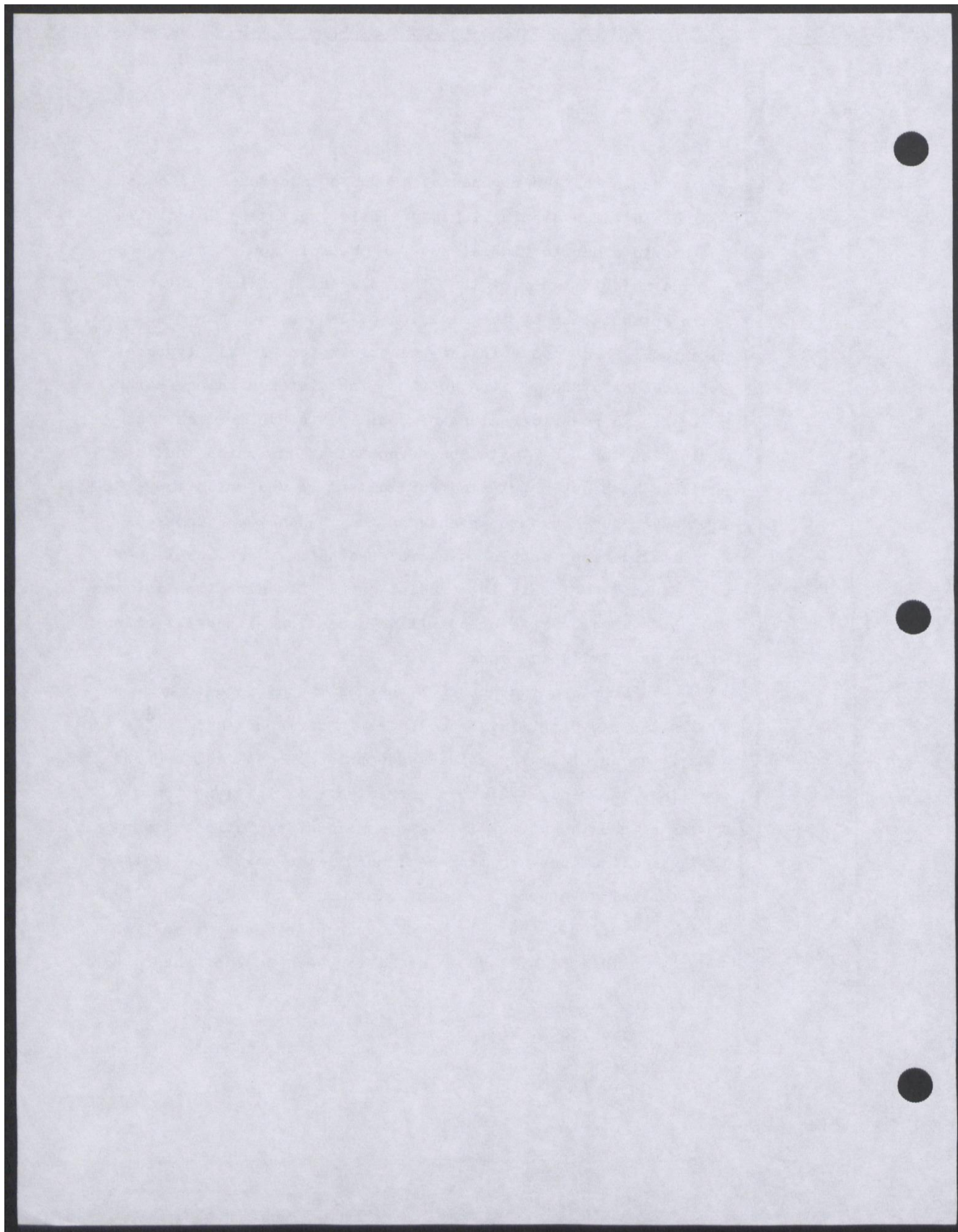
This raises the question whether the difference between civilizations and primitive societies is permanent and fundamental. Toynbee's metaphysical assumption of cyclical progress, determines the reply. Since all existence exhibits not only a process of growth but testifies to a mode of evolutionary survival, civilizations can represent merely the most recent stage of historical development.<sup>2</sup> The transformation of Sub-Man into Man, which must of necessity have occurred in a social environment, is postulated by Toynbee as having been accomplished

1. Toynbee, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 191.

2. Which in this view becomes almost indistinguishable from biological processes.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 310

**Image ID:** 15213099



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 311

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under the aegis of primitive societies.<sup>1</sup> This testifies to a level of dynamic creativeness for surpassing any achievement of the more recent species of civilizations.

The present static condition of primitive societies is therefore deceptive. It does not exhibit uninspired torpor but the last stage of integration. Mankind's task is likened by Toynbee to the climbing of a mountain of vast extent, surrounded by ledges. The exertion required for climbing its steep sides issues forth in a feverish activity that sometimes produces strength sufficient for reaching the next ledge, but more often results in a loss of the grip and a drop to the death on a lower level.<sup>2</sup>

The limitations of the human vision confine it to scanning only one perpendicular and one horizontal surface. The exhausted figures on the ledge are therefore frequently mistaken for paralytics and the climbers as the apprehension of activity. But reflection will reveal that the figures on the ledge could have attained it only by prodigious efforts and that many ledges below must be strewn with the corpses of failures of a previous dynamism.

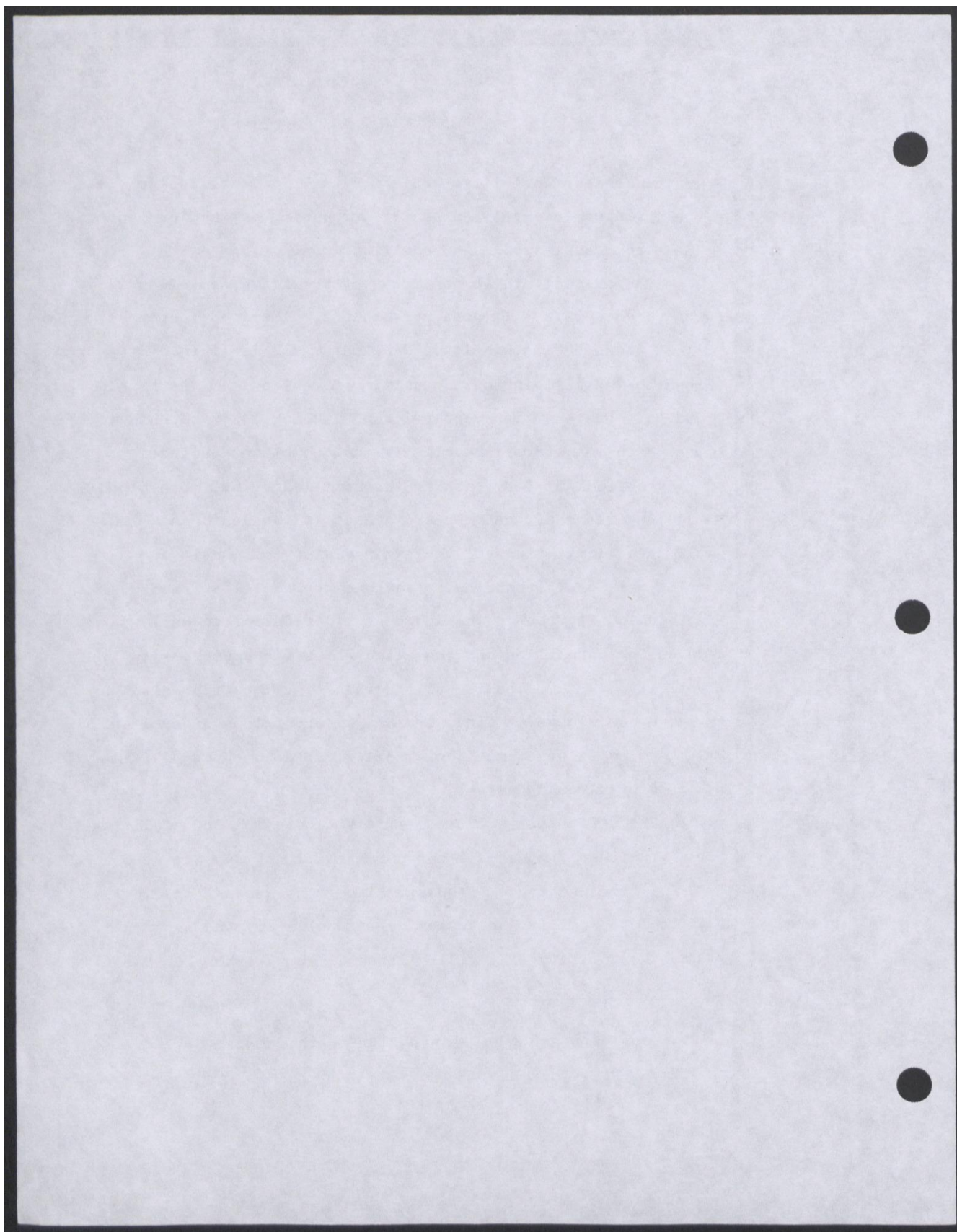
The difference between primitive societies and civilizations is neither fundamental nor permanent then, but the accident of a time and place of observation. The present static condition of primitive societies merely calls to mind past motion, just as the activity of civilizations will cease when Man has

1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 192.

2. Note correspondence of this picture with Dante's Mt. Purgatory.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 312

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 313

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been turned into Superman.

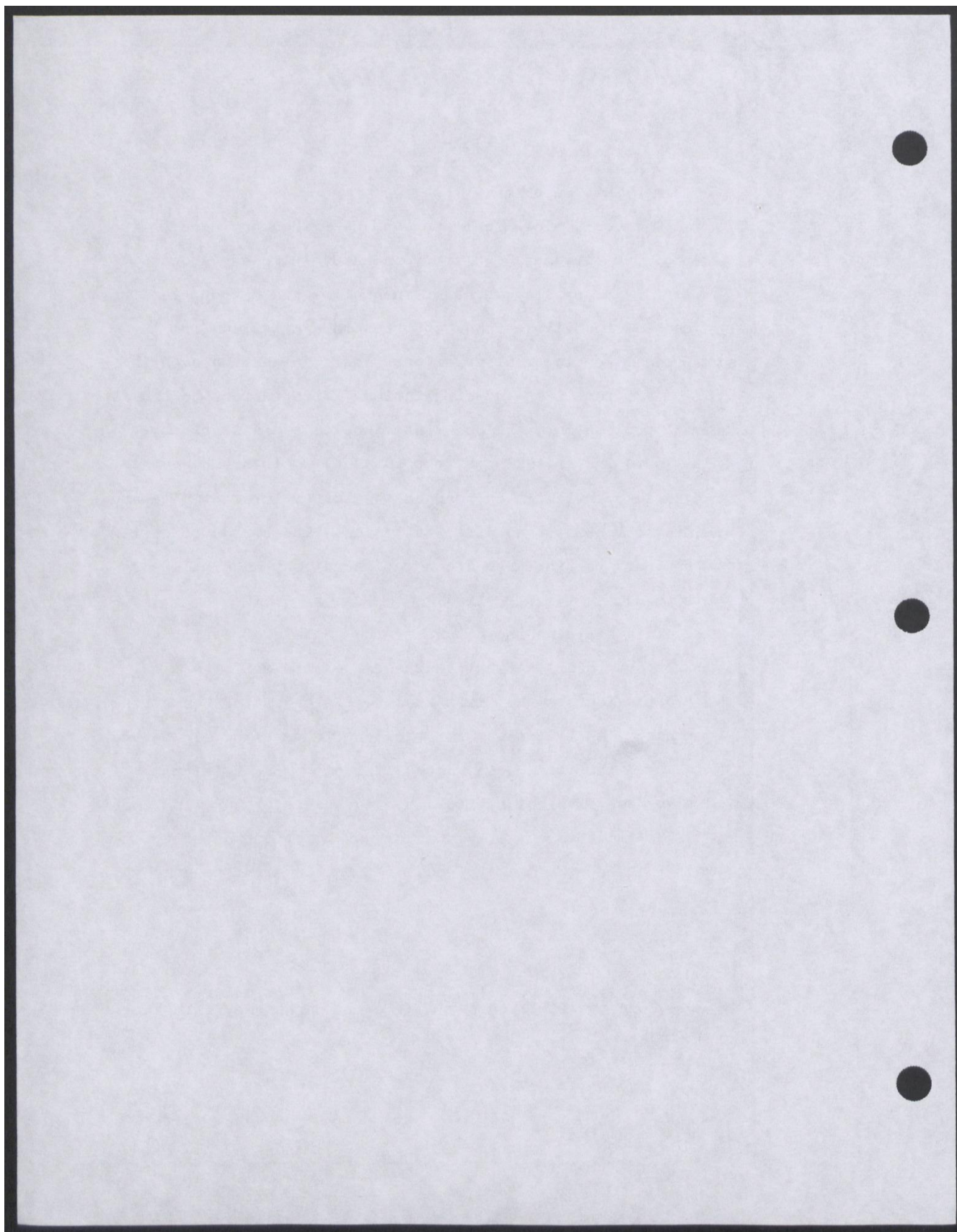
Toynbee's biological approach overrides any mere postulation of purposiveness. History is an evolutionary process operating by alternate stages of integration and differentiation. The genesis of civilizations testifies to a mutation from the static condition to creative effort. This holds true even in cases of apparentation-and-affiliation. With respect to the internal proletariat, the dominant minorities are static by definition. The secession of the internal proletariat reveals the dynamic reaction which changes the torpor into activity and the integration into new differentiation. The births of civilizations form particular beats of a general rhythmic pulse of the Universe.<sup>2</sup>

This explains the nature of the genesis of civilizations but not their particular appearance at a definite time. What are the factors that lift these entities out of the stream of humanity? What accounts for the long interval of Yin before the climb up the precipice commences? True to his empirical method Toynbee examines all possible causes before drawing conclusions. He finds the negative factor which retards activity in the vis inertia, the "cake of custom", the inherent tendency towards stability.

- 
1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 194
  2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 204. Note the similarity of this concept with Spengler and its inconsistency with the emphasis on pure volition.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 314

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This serves as the foil for the creative act, the condition to be overcome before differentiation can set in.

Two obvious alternatives present themselves as the positive factors. The mutation can be postulated as the consequence of some special quality of the human beings who have succeeded in making the transition. The change may, on the other hand, be attributed to a specially favorable constellation of environmental conditions.<sup>1</sup> Neither hypothesis is tenable according to Toynbee.

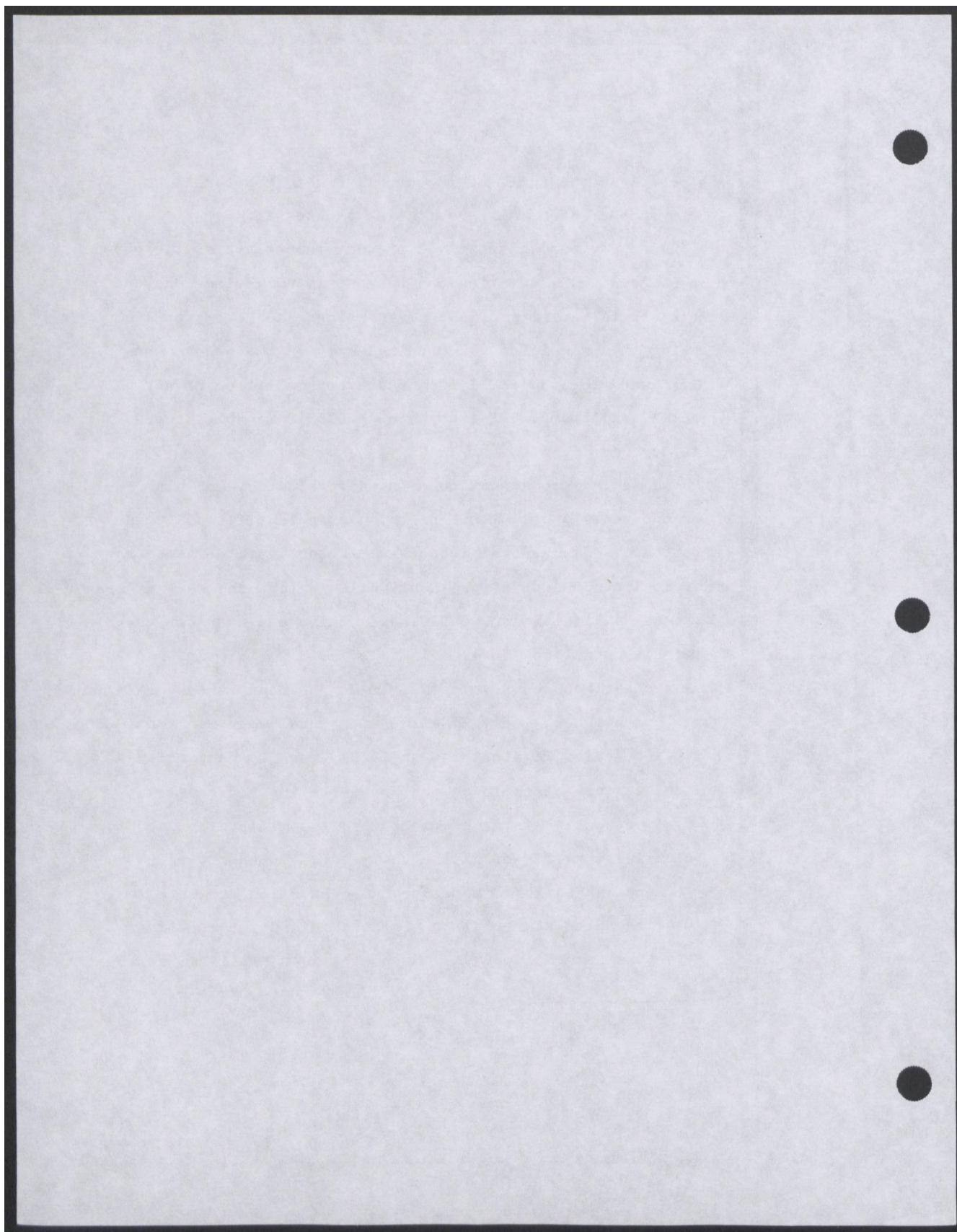
Race is a construction of human prejudice, another facet of the ego-centric delusion, for which no scientific criteria can be found. Its general acceptance in the West, derives from the Protestant concept of pre-destination which considers material success an indication of divine sanction and ascribes an insuperable deficiency to all disbelievers. It is reinforced by the racial theories developed from de Gobineau, whose primary concern had not been the validation of natural phenomena but political polemic. Against the self-evidence of the first assumption, can be set the fact that race feeling represents a relatively recent Western phenomena. In the medieval period the potential equality of all humanity constituted a cornerstone of popular belief. Moreover, no connection can be established between the pigmentation of the skin and the creative tendency that issues into the Yang state.<sup>2</sup> An empirical survey

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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 208.  
2. Toynbee Vol. I. p. 227.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 316

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Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 317

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indicates that all races except the Negro race have at one time or another produced a civilization. The simile of the climbers on the precipice proves,<sup>1</sup> however, that this deficiency need not be inherent but may result from the comparative Youth of the species.

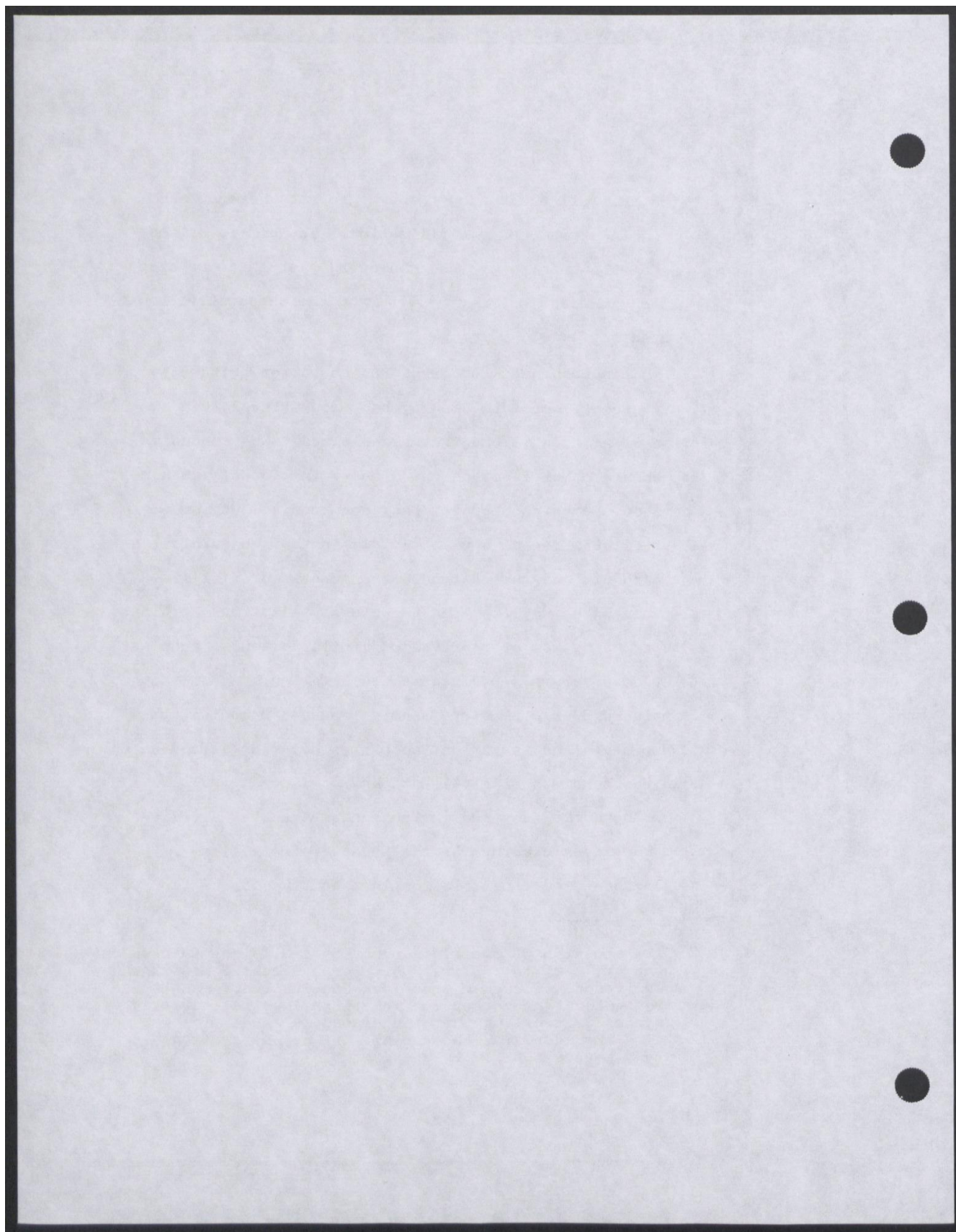
The Environmental theory fares no better. Its only conclusive proof, according to Toynbee, would involve an examination of all conditions that are claimed to be conducive to the genesis of civilizations and a determination of whether they were so operative wherever they occurred.<sup>2</sup> Such an empirical survey will reveal a wide variety in the geographical or climatic conditions that attended the genesis of civilizations. Though the Egyptian and Sumeric civilizations developed in a river basin, not every river of similar extent - such as the Colorado river- has produced a civilization. Again though the Eurasian and Arabian steppes have produced nomadism, the American prairie and the Argentine pampas have not served as an obstacle to the birth of civilizations.

If both the race and environmental theories are discredited what does account for the genesis of civilizations? Toynbee finds the solution in a combination of the two

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1. For a discussion of empirical proof by simile see Conclusions.
  2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 253. For a discussion of the conclusiveness of such a proof see Conclusions. That these environments might yet produce civilizations is indicated by Toynbee's assertion that the Minoan Island-Empire was not repeated in Indonesia. Recent history may have demonstrated the weakness of this argument.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 318

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factors. Race, while not itself the cause, represents the manifestation of an immanence that the philosophers call *Elan Vital* and the mystics *Cod*.<sup>1</sup> The Environment, again constitutes an omnipresent obstacle thwarting this force and challenging it to battle. The interaction between Race and Environment, God and the Devil exhibits the plot of the Book of Job, of Goethe's *Faust*, of life and of history.

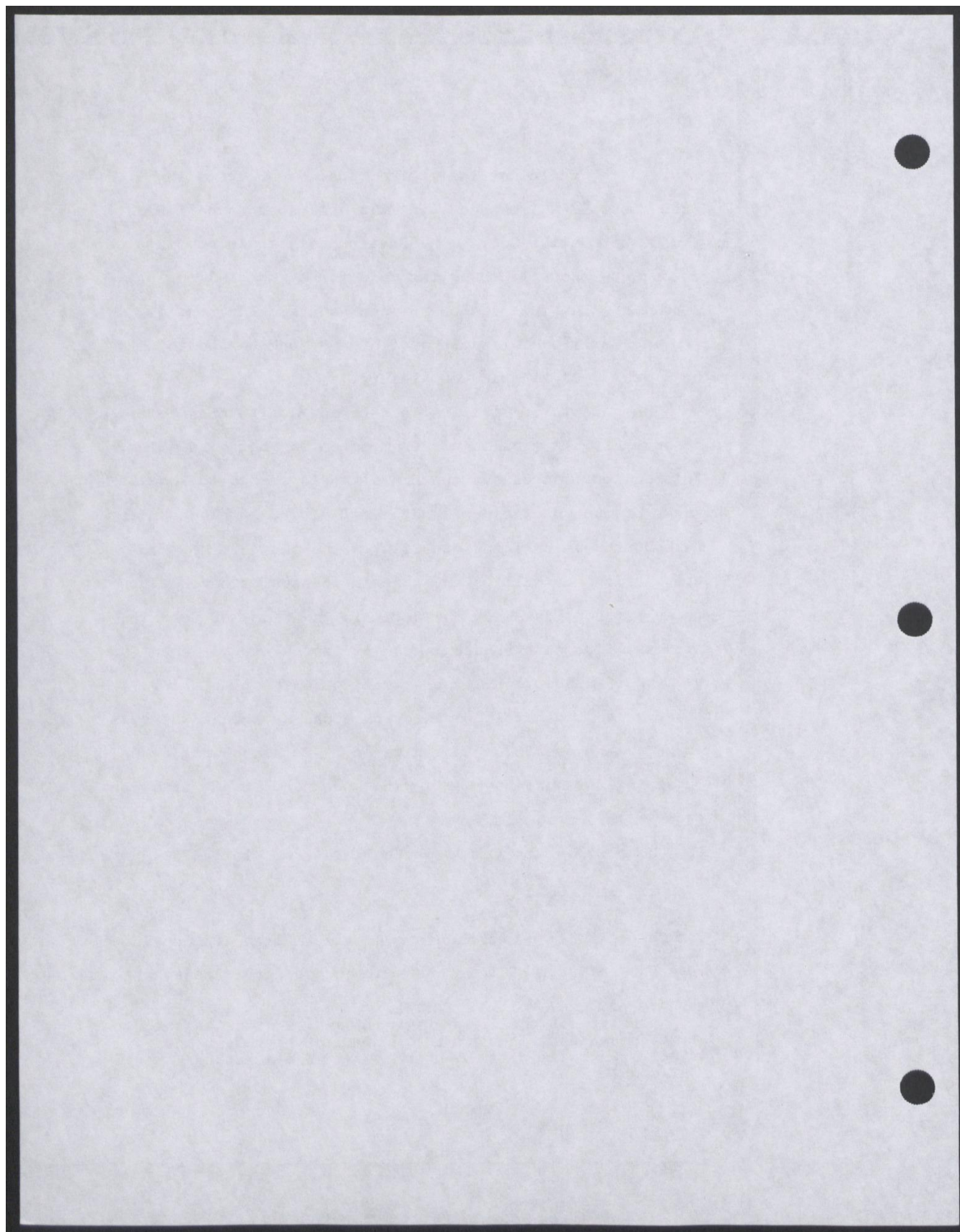
The genesis of civilizations is not due to one factor, but to several. It results not from an entity but a relation. The interaction that causes the Yin state to change to Yang is the theme of much of the profoundest mythology.<sup>2</sup> An encounter between superhuman entities constitutes the plot of the theological versions as well as the scientific assumptions.<sup>3</sup> The encounter between Yahwe and the devil is the story of Genesis, repeated with the same inherent meaning in the New Testament as the pattern of Redemption. The catastrophic impact of stars in space serves as the matrix on which physical science constructs its image of the origin of the Universe.<sup>4</sup> Both accounts agree in conceiving the encounter as a rare and unique event with consequences of unimaginable portent.

The plot begins with a perfect state of Yin.<sup>5</sup> The perfect

1. Toynbee, op. cit. Vol. I. p. 270.
2. For the validity of conclusions from mythology see Conclusions.
3. Note the reliance of this argument on Spengler's metaphysical postulate.
4. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 274.
5. The operation of challenge-and-response is described at such length because it is central to Toynbee's argument and will be utilized to illustrate limitations of his method - See post conclusions.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 320

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knowledge of Faust, the perfect goodness of Job, the perfect innocence of Adam and Eve can change into Yang only through the intervention of an external agent. It is the task of this factor to supply the inner creative force with that stimulus most like to evoke the most potently creative response.<sup>1</sup> This essentially expresses the function of the climactic factor in certain variations of the environment theory.<sup>2</sup>

In Mythology the intrusion of the Devil into God's realm supplies the impetus for the transition to the Yang state. The Lord and Satan make a wager which is then tested on a human agent. Faust, Job, Adam, represents those civilizations on the ledge who have just attained their feet and commenced the climb with a full awareness of the dangers of an ascend that brooks no stopping and in which death represents the only alternative to the achievement of the next level. However, mythology and theology make the attainment of the ledge inevitable, the winning of the bet by the devil out of the question.

Does this mean that God has cheated the devil and bet without risking anything? That would negate the essence of the encounter and could not therefore produce its vast consequences. Toynbee replies that the Devil's intervention suffices to disturb the equilibrium but can not achieve a new level of integration. God who has been yearning for an opportunity for fresh creation but could find none in the perfection of His

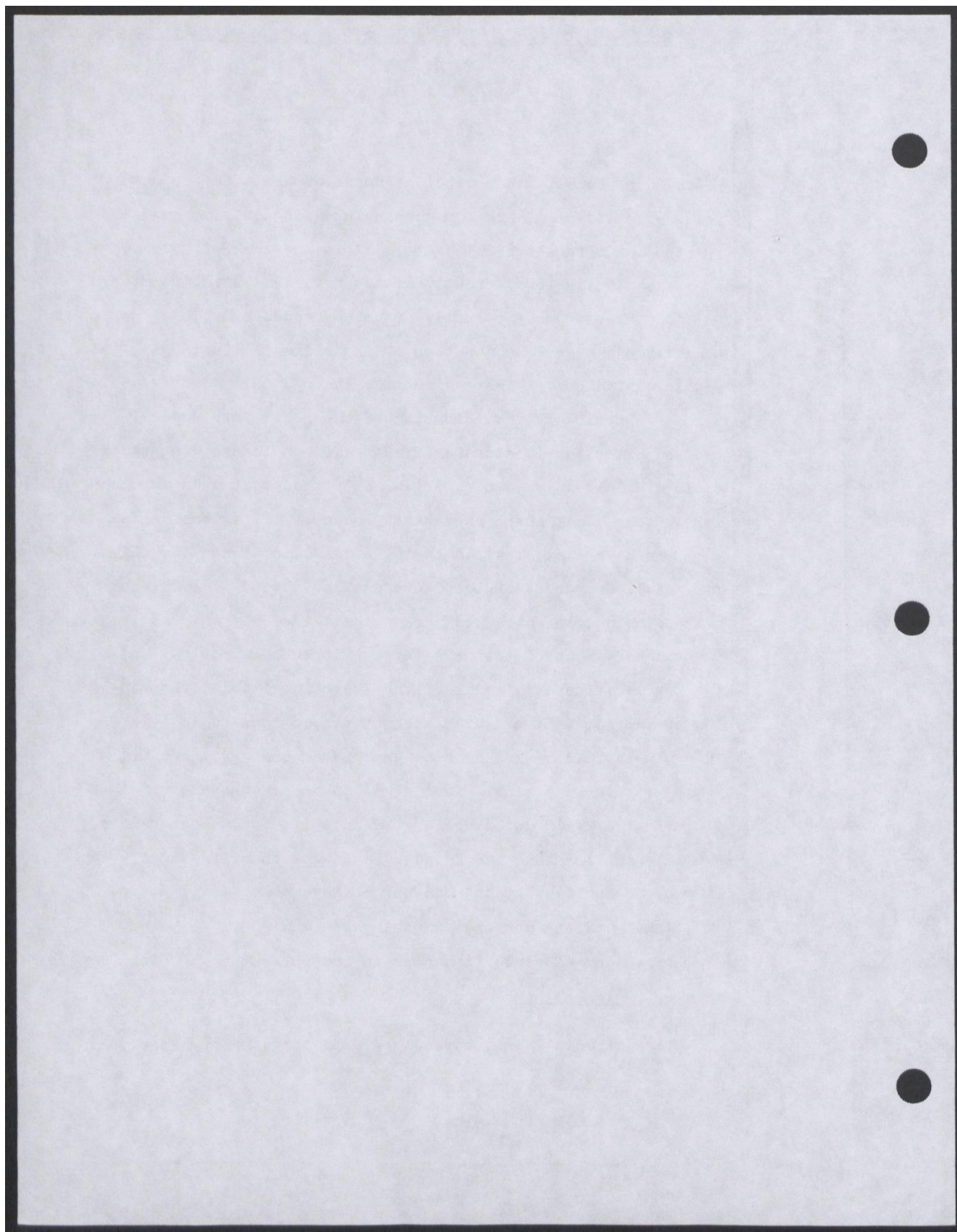
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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 278.

2. This contradicts previous approach to that theory. See post Conclusions.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 322

**Image ID:** 15213111



Caption: "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 323

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previous effort, is now enabled to restore the equilibrium on a new and higher plane. In this act of creation, no demon can participate.<sup>1</sup>

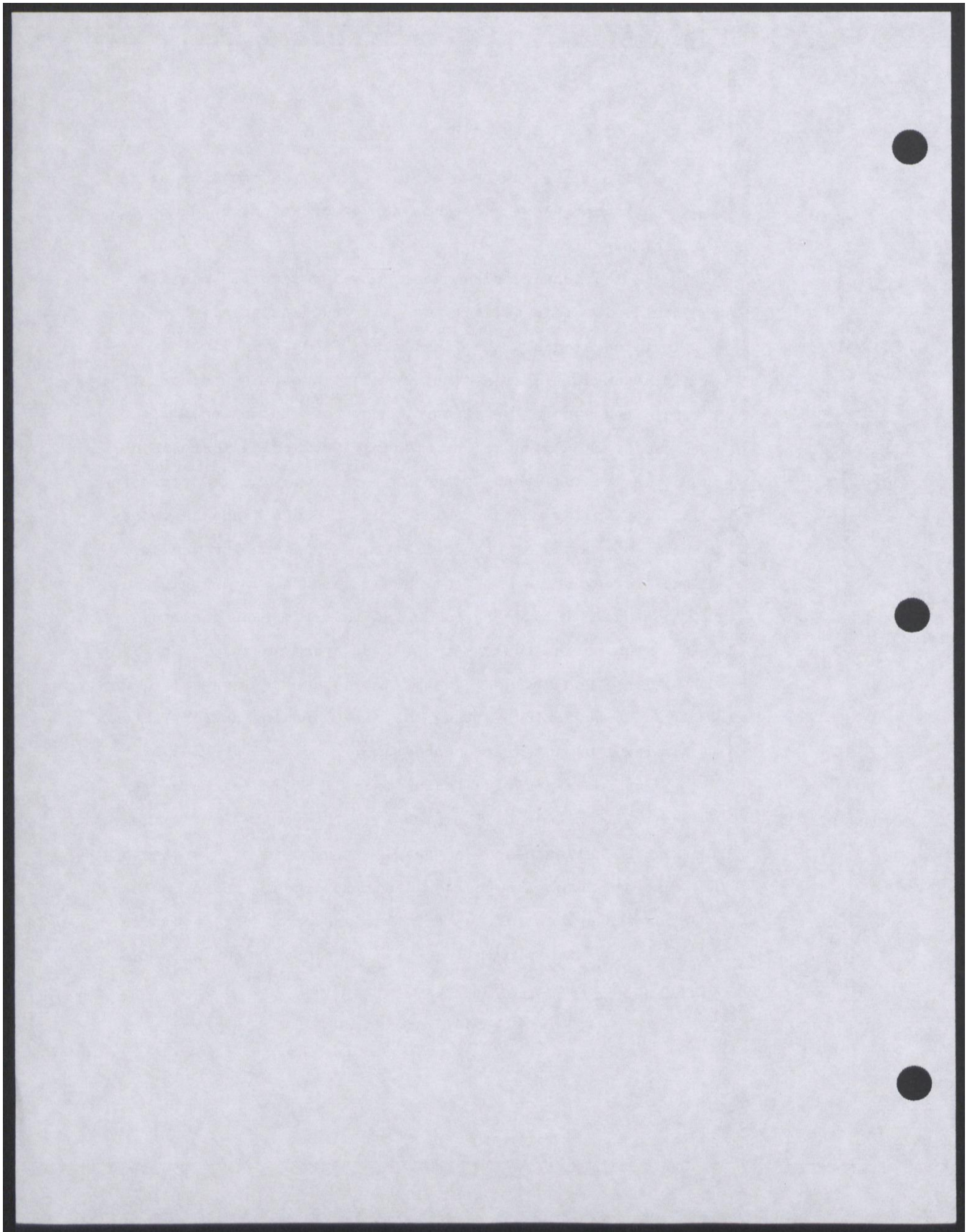
On the mundane plane, the human protagonist constitutes the theater for this activity and his ordeal accomplishes itself in three stages. The first stage finds symbolic expression in the assault of the tempter and changes the state of Yin to Yang, from harmony to discord, from rest to motion. With awareness of the fatedness of a course from which there is no return, begins the second stage, the crisis. The momentary rebellion at finding oneself but a tool in God's hands is transcended by the peace of reconciliation. This enables man to achieve victory through defeat, peace through suffering. Man resigns himself into God's hands and thus reverses the rhythm again - from motion towards rest, from storm to calm, from Yang back to Yin. God stands revealed not as a hard taskmaster, nor the cause of suffering, but as the all-embracing Love which made the new level of integration possible.<sup>2</sup>

Toynbee's positive factor then, that explains the genesis of civilizations and the emerging differentiation is the relation of Challenge-and-Response. Life presents a series of problems, each a challenge to undergo an ordeal. No calculation, however prudent of quantitative phenomena can serve for the prediction of historical events. For nobody can know the

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1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 284.
  2. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 298.

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 324

**Image ID:** 15213113



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"unknown God",<sup>1</sup> the reaction of the protagonist when the ordeal actually occurs.

Despite this analysis of the imponderability of the response, Toynbee engages in an extensive analysis of the historically effective stimuli to determine the range of possible responses. An examination of the genesis of civilizations leads to the "law" that their birth results not from unusually easy, but from difficult environments frequently in response to changes in climate (f.e. the Genesis of the Egyptian or Sumeric civilization). Though, at first blush, the related civilizations do not seem to constitute a reaction to an environment, closer reflection indicates that their response is not to the physical but to the human environment. The internal proletariat's will to secede testifies to the dominant minority's will to repress, the final breaking away to the intolerability of the challenge. Moreover the geographical location of the affiliated civilization usually presents a greater stimulus than the physical locus of the parent civilizations. Both the physical and human environment, then, can provide the challenge that attends the genesis of civilizations.

The intensity of the response represents a function of the severity of the stimulus. Ease is inimical to civilizations.<sup>2</sup> The stimulus of hard countries led to the superiority

1. Toynbee op. cit. Vol. I. p. 302.

2. Illustrated by examples from the Odyssey, Capua, Roman Campaigna. For limitations of this methodology see post "Conclusions."

**Caption:** "The Meaning of History"-copy of final submitted version [1 of 3], Image 326

**Image ID:** 15213115

