

been conceived as "Philosophy," later acquiring the title of "Metaphysics."

## 8. THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH AND PHILOSOPHY

In this thought of Being, man's freedom for ex-sistence (a freedom which is the basis of all history) is put into words. This is not to be understood as the "expression" of an "opinion"; rather this word (Being) is the well-preserved structure of the truth of what-is-in-totality. How many have ears for this word matters little. Those who hear it determine man's place in history. But at that moment in the world when philosophy came to birth there also began, and not before, the express domination of common sense (Sophism).

Sophism appeals to the non-problematical character of what is manifest and interprets all intellectual interrogation as an attack upon sound common sense and its unhappy susceptibilities.

But what philosophy is in the estimation of sound common sense (which is perfectly justified in its own domain) does not affect its essence, which is determined solely by its relations with the original truth of what-is-as-such in totality. But because the complete essence of truth also includes its "dis-essence" and because it functions primarily as dissimulation, philosophy, regarded as the quest for this truth, has a two-fold nature. Its meditations have the calm dignity of gentleness, not denying the dissimulation of what-is in totality. At the same time they have the "open

resolve" of hardness, which, while not shattering the dissimulation, forces its essence whole and intact into the open, into our understanding, and so to reveal its own truth.

In the gentle hardness and hard gentleness with which it lets what-is-as-such *be* in totality, philosophy becomes a questioning which not merely holds fast to what-is, but can admit no outside authority. Kant had some idea of the inmost extremity of such thinking when he said of philosophy: "We now see philosophy in a doubtful position indeed, a position which is supposed to be a firm one regardless of the fact that neither in heaven nor on earth is it attached to or supported by anything whatsoever. In this position philosophy has to demonstrate its sincerity as the keeper of its own laws, not as the herald of laws which ingrained sense or some kind of guardian Nature whispers in its ear."

With this interpretation of the nature of philosophy Kant, whose work is a prelude to the latest phase of Western metaphysics, looks out into a sphere which, because his metaphysics were rooted in subjectivity, he could only understand in subjective terms and was bound to understand as keeping its own laws. All the same, the glimpse he had of the function of philosophy is still sufficiently broad to reject all enslavement of philosophical thought, the most helpless of which is to be found in the subterfuge of letting philosophy assert itself merely as an "expression" of "culture" (Spengler), as the ornament of a creative humanity.