

Weighing the Fold  
– "A Dialogue on Language"– (2)

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**Relation to Danger**

But where danger is, grows

The saving power also.

[Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst

Das Rettende auch.]

In Heidegger's lectures, "The Question Concerning Technology" and "The Turning," we find that these words of Hölderlin provide a hint to Heidegger about the essential ambiguity concealed in danger: they hint that "the selfsame danger is, when it is *as* the danger, the saving power." The saving power is not separate from danger: it brings danger into its "home" and safeguards its "essence [Wesen]."<sup>1</sup> In Heidegger's later thinking danger manifests itself as an essential problem that he has to face. Especially in these two lectures Heidegger reflects on danger by questioning our relation to the "essence" of technology, "Ge-stell." He shows that danger, the oblivion of Being, is found nowhere other than in the relation between man and Being, and that it is always ambiguous. While the danger revealed as "Ge-stell" entraps the truth of Being with oblivion by gathering man's relation to Being into the rule of technological ordering, it simultaneously conceals in itself the possibility of the arrival of the saving power, of the unconcealment of Being. Heidegger holds that it is in the "essence" of danger that the possibility of a turning is concealed: the turning of danger into the saving power will take place only when danger comes to light *as* the danger. And it is suggested that this turning will come to pass in language. (Since, in Heidegger's

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger does not use the word "essence [Wesen]" in the sense of *essentia* or whatness of a thing, but in the sense of coming-to-presence and enduring. For example, see Martin Heidegger, *Die Technik und die Kehre*, pp. 30-31; *The Question concerning Technology and Other Essays*, pp. 30-31.

thinking, the turning of danger concerns the turning of the relation between man and Being and this relation of "nearness" between man and Being is considered to occur as language, one could say that the turning of danger is the turning of language itself.)

When we look at his later text "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer [Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache Zwischen einem Japaner und einem Fragenden]" with his understanding of danger in mind, we notice that it occupies a very important and intriguing position in his works as a whole.<sup>2</sup> This text makes us wonder why Heidegger wrote in the form of dialogue when the question of language and danger (revealed in and as the essence of technology) became increasingly important in his thinking.

"A Dialogue on Language," like the movement of *Schwingung*, exists as a relation to the enigma of the "weight," as a relation to danger. It exists as a balance which weighs danger, more precisely danger hidden in language itself, or the fold. It can be regarded as Heidegger's attempt to create a textual space--like a stage--where the relation between danger and language, or danger hidden in language itself, is "shown" or exposed.<sup>3</sup> To put it another way, by writing in the form of a dialogue and trying to attune himself to its rhythm and movement,

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, pp. 83-155; *On The Way to Language*, pp. 1-54. All further references to this work are included in text.

<sup>3</sup> "A Dialogue on Language" has been interpreted from many perspectives. For example, some critics have regarded it as a text which contains Heidegger's self-reflection on his earlier concerns: Joseph Kockelmans recognizes in the text evidence of Heidegger's strong interest in theology in his early period which is the basis of his hermeneutic phenomenology. Joseph Kockelmans, *On the Truth of Being: Reflections on Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, pp. 124-125. The text has also been read in terms of Heidegger's encounter with Eastern thought: Graham Parkes observes that Heidegger distances himself from the tradition of considering only the Indo-European languages in understanding the nature of language. Graham Parkes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, pp. 213-216. Robert Mugerauer points out the fusion of the text's structure with Heidegger's understanding of the nature of thinking, demonstrating the intricate structure of the dialogue where three distinct sub-dialogues are woven together into a unified work: the first level of reporting, the second level of man's thinking, and the third level of language's speaking. Robert Mugerauer, *Heidegger's Language and Thinking*, pp. 19-62. Jean-Luc Nancy holds that the dialogue puts on the stage [mettre en scène] the nature of dialogue itself – "le dialogue essentiel s'y dialogue lui-même." Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le partage des voix*, Paris: Galilée, 1982; "Sharing Voices" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context*. Translated by Gayle L. Ormiston. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 211-259. I will refer to this text later in this essay.

Heidegger himself sought to create an occasion to "wait for" the turning of danger. He tried to write a dialogue which can be the site of "Vorspiel" to the event of turning.<sup>4</sup> For him, it is a textual space in which the turning of danger is anticipated in the movement of *Schwingung* between danger and the saving power. We could also say that the dialogue appears as the movement of *Schwingung* between going away from danger and getting closer to danger: it is the movement which seeks to stave off the danger by "walking toward the danger."

According to Heidegger, this dialogue was "originated in 1953/54, on the occasion of a visit by Professor Tezuka of the Imperial University, Tokyo." In his commentary on this text Tezuka says that he visited Heidegger in the suburbs of Freiburg in March, 1954 and talked with him for about an hour and half.<sup>5</sup> Tezuka says that they discussed many issues including Japanese thought and Japanese art, the interpretation of Rilke's poetry, and Christianity in European culture.<sup>6</sup> As

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<sup>1</sup> Another Heidegger text, "Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit: Aus einem Feldweggespräch über das Denken [Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking]" in *Gelassenheit*, can also be read in terms of his attempt to write a dialogue which can be the site of "Vorspiel." Indeed, this text clearly shows how, in Heidegger, a conversation is inseparable from "waiting" (and "Gelassenheit").

<sup>5</sup> This statement leads us to suppose that the text was probably written in 1954, not in 1953-54. After returning to Japan, Tezuka translated this text into Japanese and appended his commentary to the translated text. In the commentary Tezuka writes that this text must be considered not as the record of an actual conversation but as a text which was written out of a kind of interest which the conversation had aroused in Heidegger. For example, Tezuka shows that although the Japanese speaker in the text is presented as a person who had studied with Kuki, in fact Tezuka did not know Kuki personally. He adds that a Japanese speaker who is presented as having a thorough knowledge of Heidegger's thought and expressions does not correspond to him, either. Also Tezuka states that in the text he recognizes some expressions that he himself would not say. Tomio Tezuka, *Kotoba ni tuite no taiwa*. Tokyo: Risosha, 1968, pp. 137-150.

<sup>6</sup> Tezuka's essay "Heidegger tono ichijikan [An Hour with Heidegger]" describes the first half of the conversation with Heidegger, and another Tezuka essay "Mittsu no kotae [Three Responses]" describes the latter half of the conversation. The following is a summary of Tezuka's account. In the first half, Heidegger asked Tezuka about Japanese thought and art. First Heidegger showed a few pictures of Kuki's grave which were sent by another Japanese. Then, expressing his interest in Zen, he asked questions about a haiku of Basho, the Japanese language (especially what "Kotoba [word]" means to the Japanese), the nature of Japanese art, and so forth. Next, Heidegger asked which Japanese words correspond to "Erscheinung" and "Wesen." To this question, Tezuka responded that they are "Iro" and "Ku." Then they discussed Akira Kurosawa's film, "Rashomon." Thus, in the first half of the conversation, Heidegger asked questions and Tezuka tried to answer them. In the latter half, Tezuka first asked questions about Heidegger's essay, "What are Poets For?,"

Tezuka says in his commentary on the text, Heidegger's basic intention in writing it was not to reenact the conversation between Heidegger and Tezuka held in March, 1954. Rather, one imagines that the conversation between Heidegger and Tezuka triggered the writing, an attempt to give birth to a space where the nature of language reveals itself.

The text's title gives us a hint of the nature of the dialogue presented in it. In "Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache Zwischen einem Japaner und einem Fragenden [A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer]," we notice that Heidegger uses the phrase "von der Sprache," instead of "über die Sprache." This indicates that he intended the dialogue to speak not *about* language considered as the object for speaking/thinking subjects, but rather to come forth *out of* the "essence" of language as such: it comes to presence as a response to the call coming *from* language. Indeed in the dialogue two interlocutors say by turns, ". . . the undefined defining something . . . the nature of language. That is defining our dialogue" (112; 22). Moreover, we find that the dialogue happens in the "between," "between a Japanese and an Inquirer." This "between" is not to be understood in terms of a relation which draws two speaking subjects who are already themselves prior to the "dialogue": it can be considered as a relation which makes the existence of two speakers possible, as "a Japanese" and "an inquirer." For Heidegger, the relation of "between" is a separation which brings forth and maintains a stage-like space where the two speakers become other, one beside the other, or each is exposed to its other. At least we can say that Heidegger tries to show this relation of "between."

The dialogue begins with a scene where the two speakers recall their

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especially about his interpretation of Rilke's poetry, since Tezuka specializes in German poetry and shares a great interest in Hölderlin and Rilke. Then Tezuka asked questions about Christianity and European culture: he asked whether Christianity is capable of grounding the development of European culture in the future. Heidegger said "No" to this question, arguing that people's belief in the power of Christianity poses the greatest danger to European culture. Tezuka explained that the reason he had asked the question was that postwar Japan lacked a spiritual support that could be compared to Christianity in Europe. Heidegger responded that it was better to search for spiritual support knowing its lack than to cling to a support which in fact can never be a support; "Mitsu no kotae," "Heidegger tonō Ichijikan" in *Kotoba ni tsuite no taiwa*, pp. 151-166. One finds an English translation of "An Hour with Heidegger" in May, Reinhard. *Heidegger's hidden sources: East Asian influences on his work*. Translated by Graham Parkes. London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 59-64.

"memory [Andenken]" of their mutual acquaintance Kuki who is dead at the time of the dialogue. More concretely it begins with photographs of his grave in the grove in a temple in Kyoto, as if a trace of Kuki's life which had been dedicated to the dialogue between Western aesthetics and East Asian aesthetics provided an occasion for the present dialogue: it begins with the representation of death, of the unrepresentable as such. This beginning suggests that this dialogue between a Japanese and an inquirer is at the same time a dialogue between them and Kuki, who is no longer here.

The interlocutors start by asking whether East Asian aesthetics needs to chase after European aesthetic conceptual systems in order to explain the nature of its art. This reflection leads them to a discussion of danger. The word "danger" first comes from the lips of the Japanese: "I have a constant sense of danger which Count Kuki, too, could obviously not overcome." He feels that "danger" is the Japanese people's deprecation of their way of thinking as vague and amorphous; they are led astray by the richness of concepts in European languages (88; 3). The inquirer responds, radicalizing the problem of danger, "Yet a far greater danger threatens. It concerns both of us; it is all the more menacing just by being more inconspicuous," adding that "the danger is threatening from a region [Gegend] where we do not suspect it, and which is yet precisely the region where we would have to experience [erfahren] it" (88; 3). Then he remembers the danger which he sensed when he had dialogues with Kuki many years before: they discussed a Japanese aesthetic experience — *Iki*. Reflecting on the past dialogues with Kuki, the inquirer says that the danger "was hidden in language itself [verbarg sich in der Sprache selbst], not in *what* [they] discussed, nor in the *way in which* [they] tried to do so" (89; 4), and now he realizes with the Japanese interlocutor that this danger means that "the language of the dialogue constantly destroyed the possibility of saying what the dialogue was about [das zu sagen, was besprochen wurde]" (89; 5). Thus, according to the inquirer, "the region" from which the danger threatens is precisely language. The danger lies not only in that the Japanese aesthetic experience is discussed in language of Western metaphysics which "move[s] within the distinction between the real as sensuous, and the ideal as nonsensuous" (105; 17). But, in a more radical sense, danger means that some hidden nature of language threatens the

unfolding of the nature of dialogue itself. It is important that the present dialogue opens with the memory [Andenken] of Kuki, the memory of danger itself. Or one could say that it is the memory of danger, or the trace of danger that opens the dialogue. Evidently, all through the dialogue their chief concern is to stave off this danger, and simultaneously, to "walk toward the danger" (113; 23). The inquirer believes that the only way to achieve this is that they themselves make an effort to "think in dialogue [gesprächsweise denken]" (124; 31) – to attune themselves to the swinging rhythm of the dialogue.<sup>7</sup>

### The Space of Testing Language

Man speaks *from* [von] language, instead of speaking *about* [über] language. This idea is central to Heidegger's later thought on language.<sup>8</sup> Instead of speaking about language by taking it as an object of speaking, man speaks by listening to and responding to the speaking of language:

Language speaks. Man speaks in that he responds to language. [Die Sprache spricht. Der Mensch spricht, insofern er der Sprache entspricht.] This responding is a hearing. It hears because it listens to the command of stillness. It is not a matter here of stating a new view of language. What is important is learning to live in the speaking of language. To do so, we need to test constantly whether and to what extent we are capable of what genuinely belongs to responding: anticipation in reserve. [Alles

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<sup>7</sup> A German suffix *-weise* changes a noun or an adjective into an adverb: for example, *teilweise* [partly, partially, in part], *glücklicherweise* [luckily]. A noun *Weise* means 'manner, way, method,' 'style, fashion, mode,' '(in the field of music) melody, air, tune,' etc. Taking the musical sense into consideration, we can interpret the phrase "*gesprächsweise denken*" as 'to think in the melody, air or rhythm of a dialogue.' It implies that a dialogue itself has a kind of rhythm and that thinking is at work if it matches the rhythm coming from the "essence" of dialogue.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Heidegger writes in "The Nature of Language": "We speak and speak of/from [von] language. What we speak of/from [von], language, is always ahead of [voraus] us. Our speaking merely follows language constantly. Thus we are continually lagging behind what we first ought to have overtaken and taken up in order to speak of/from [von] it." Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, p. 179; *On the Way to Language*, p. 75. He also writes: "It [the movement of nearness] remains unapproachable, and is farthest from us whenever we speak "about" [über] it." *Ibid.*, p. 211; trans., p. 104. Also see "A Dialogue on Language" (149-152; 50-52). While the preposition "von" means 'of' or 'from, out of,' "über" means 'over, above, on top of,' 'superior to,' 'beyond,' and 'about.'

beruht darin, das Wohnen im Sprechen der Sprache zu lernen. Dazu bedarf es der ständigen Prüfung, ob und inwieweit wir das Eigentliche des Entsprechens vermögen: das Zuvorkommen in der Zurückhaltung.]<sup>9</sup>

Heidegger stresses that in order to "learn to live in the speaking of language," we need "constant testing [ständige Prüfung]": "whether and to what extent we are capable of what genuinely belongs to responding [das Eigentliche des Entsprechens]" needs to be tested ceaselessly. The phrase "what genuinely belongs to responding [das Eigentliche des Entsprechens]" corresponds to the phrase after the colon "anticipation in reserve [das Zuvorkommen in der Zurückhaltung]." The verb "zuvorkommen" means 'to be before (in front of),' 'to anticipate,' and 'to anticipate the other's moves.' The verb "vorkommen" which usually means 'to be found, present itself, happen,' 'to visit,' 'to appear,' includes the sense of "being tried in a court." The noun "Zurückhaltung" means 'retention,' 'restraint, reserve.' These senses lead us to think that the phrase indicates a paradoxical manner in which seemingly opposite forces coexist: coming to the fore and hanging back, revealing and concealing, and anticipating what has not yet arrived and retaining what has already happened. There is a kind of intensity that such a relation maintains in its suspense. And what should be tested is whether man is capable of bearing the tension revealed by this phrase. To put it another way, the "manner [Weise]" in which man responds to language needs to be tested: Heidegger writes, "anticipation in reserve determines the manner [Weise] in which mortals respond to the dif-ference."<sup>10</sup> "The dif-ference" in this context can be understood as language which comes to pass as the threshold, the dimension of the between which simultaneously separates and gathers, divides and joins. We should pay attention to the word "manner [Weise]" here, for this word becomes very important when we try to understand what Heidegger thinks about man's relation to Being or man's thinking itself. In *What Is Called Thinking?*, he stresses the importance of the word and defines "the manner of the saying [die Weise des Sagens]": "By 'manner,' we mean something other than style and manner or mode. 'Manner' here means melody, the ring and

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, pp. 32-33; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 210.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32; trans., pp. 209-210.

tone, which is not just a matter of how speech sounds. The manner of the saying is the tone from which and to which what is said is attuned [Die Weise verstehen wir jedoch anders denn als Art und Weise, als modus. Weise ist hier gemeint als Melodie, als Klang und Ton, der nicht nur die Verlautbarung des Sagens angeht. Die Weise des Sagens ist der Ton, aus dem und auf den sein Gesagtes gestimmt ist.]<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the "manner" involves the rhythm and musicality of the relation between man and Being, i.e. of language itself. One can say that when Heidegger emphasizes the necessity of "constant testing," he means that one needs to test the "manner" in which man attunes himself to the rhythm or "melody, ring and tone" coming from Being.

In order to understand further the significance of testing in Heidegger's thinking, let us look at the sense of the word "prüfen" which Heidegger uses when he brings up the motif of testing. The word "prüfen" means 'to test, examine, inspect, scrutinize, investigate,' 'to look into, audit,' 'to put on trial,' 'to weigh,' etc. Its noun "Prüfung" includes such senses as 'visitation, affliction, ordeal.' Thus "prüfen" can mean putting on trial or exposing to an ordeal or affliction, which implies that the entire ground on which one stands is called into question.

The sense of "prüfen" as weighing, putting on the balance, is often recognized in Heidegger's discussion of "the essence of language." For example, in *The Question of Being*, one can find a close link between testing and weighing. Describing how his words and expressions have often been rejected as "murky rumblings" or "arbitrary pronouncements," he argues that regardless of this situation, the thinker who is learning to think must "think of testing the saying of reflective thinking in a more original and more careful manner [denken, die Sage des andenkenden Denkens ursprünglicher und sorgsamer zu prüfen]."<sup>12</sup> This means that the thinker should experience "the essential multiplicity of meaning of words and phraseology [die wesenhafte Mehrdeutigkeit des Wortes und seiner Wendungen]." It is implied that his words and expressions are not "murky rumblings" or "arbitrary pronouncements" but the result of his effort to experience

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<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?*, pp. 13-14; *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, p. 104; *The Question of Being*, p. 105.



language in its "essential multiplicity of meaning." Interestingly, the sense of "Mehrdeutigkeit" is depicted in terms of "weight" of language: Heidegger writes, "the multiplicity of meaning plays in the process of being balanced on the scales, whose oscillations we seldom experience [die Mehrdeutigkeit spielt im Ausgewogenen, dessen Schwingung wir selten erfahren]." "Mehrdeutigkeit" reveals itself as oscillations, vibrations or a leap [Schwingung] in its play when it is weighed on the scales, pondered, and thus tested. Here the weight of the "essence" of language can be considered not in terms of the ordinary sense of weight that we are familiar with but in terms of the *Schwingung* of the balance, that is, the *Schwingung* of language at the site of "the event of appropriation [Ereignis]" (the event which gathers all beings by holding them in the balance, the gathering of "there is," an opening that makes the arrival of "something" possible). In other words, the sense of testing as weighing means not so much ascertaining a fixed weight as experiencing and preserving the oscillations of the balance, that is, the oscillations of language itself.<sup>13</sup> This is directly linked to the "manner" in which man attunes himself to Being.

Another important aspect of "prüfen" involves exposing something hidden in a space like a stage. Being tested means being brought forward, scrutinized, and examined. Whatever is being tested is put at risk. That is to say, it risks its secret. So testing entails exposing the secret while keeping it, or revealing it while concealing it.<sup>14</sup> To consider the testing of language in this sense, one could say that the secret of language is exposed on stage and put at stake. Weighing language and experiencing language as the *Schwingung* is possible only in this stage-like space. At the same time, the secret of language can be exposed as if being put on the stage only when man endeavors to entrust himself to the rhythm

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<sup>13</sup> We find this motif of testing as "weighing" in "A Dialogue on Language" as well. The word "prüfen" is used to describe the need to "examine whether each word in each case is given its full-most often hidden – weight." Here the two speakers discuss that they must weigh each word of earlier thinkers so that its full weight will be unconcealed (124; 31).

<sup>14</sup> *La carte postale*, written by Derrida, embodies the paradox in which exposing the secret by publishing that which looks like a "post card" is at the same time destroying the secret by fire and thereby keeping the secret. Jacques Derrida, *La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà*. Paris: Flammarion, 1980, pp. 189-190; *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 175-176.

coming from the "essence" of language. Testing marks the site in which the relation between man and Being, which reveals itself as language, is ceaselessly put on trial, if you will, in its musical and theatrical "essence."

As we have seen, Heidegger holds that the thinker who is learning to think must "think of testing the saying of reflective thinking." And he himself attempts to "test the saying of reflective thinking." "A Dialogue on Language" clearly reveals this attempt to test language.

We recall here the definition of thinking that is presented in *Identity and Difference*. It is the "building" of a self-suspended structure, made of the *Schwingung* of language, more precisely, "the most delicate and thus most susceptible vibration holding everything within the suspended structure of the appropriation [die zarteste, aber auch die anfälligste, alles verhaltende Schwingung im schwebenden Bau des Ereignisses]." He writes, "To think of appropriating as the event of appropriation means to build this self-vibrating realm [Das Ereignis als Er-eignis denken, heißt, am Bau dieses in sich schwingenden Bereiches bauen]. Thinking receives the tools [Bauzeug] for this self-suspended structure from language." In this respect, "A Dialogue on Language" can be looked upon as Heidegger's attempt to "think," that is, to "build" a self-vibrating realm. It is an attempt to "build," with language, a self-suspended structure, which is the balance itself. The present dialogue seeks to be the *Schwingung* of the balance. It seeks to be the balance that can be understood in the following senses given in "What Are Poets For?": the venture (i.e. the destining and the way-making movement), the law (i.e. the *Ereignis*, the gathering force), and weighing (i.e. the manner in which Being weighs and measures beings in shaking and rocking their ground).

The dialogue is constructed as the balance. It is the space of testing language, of weighing language, where "the essence of language" is staged as the movement of *Schwingung* or as *Merdeutigkeit*.

Thus this dialogue shows that Heidegger's project is to "build" language as the balance which can measure the "weight" of the essence of language.

### **Hesitation – Agitation**

At the early stage of the dialogue, the insurmountable distance between the

two language horizons is marked:

I: Some time ago I called language, clumsily enough, the house of Being.

If man by virtue of his language dwells within the claim and call of Being, then we Europeans presumably dwell in an entirely different house than East Asian man.

J: Assuming that the languages of the two are not merely different but are other in nature, and radically so.

I: And so, a dialogue from house to house remains nearly impossible.

(90; 5)

The two speakers propose that they may live in two entirely different "houses of Being" which "are other in nature [anderen Wesens sind]" and feel that it is "nearly impossible" to have a dialogue between the two. At the same time, they keenly sense the danger that the language of a dialogue which rests "within the purview of European ideas," within Western metaphysics, might destroy their attempt to have a dialogue: the inquirer says, "I now see *still* more clearly the danger that the language of our dialogue might constantly destroy the possibility of saying that of which we are speaking" (103; 15).

Although both speakers feel that "the *nature* of language [das Sprachwesen]" remains completely "other" to them both, at one point the inquirer feels compelled to ask a question which has long troubled him and plucks up the nerve to do so. Yet at the same time, he says that the only way our reflection can get out into the open is if "from the very outset we do not demand [verlangen] too much,"<sup>15</sup> and that the question he is asking is "an altogether preliminary [vorläufige] question." He tries to avoid the danger that he sensed in his dialogue with Kuki.

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<sup>15</sup> This is related to the motif of "waiting [Warten]" discussed in "Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking." "Waiting" is described as "releasing oneself into the openness of that-which-regions [auf das Offene der Gegnet sich einlassen]," into the unconcealment of Being. Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit*, p. 48; *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 72. It remains outside of any kind of will which is associated with "re-presenting." The inquirer's statement about *Being and Time* in "A Dialogue on Language" could be thought of in terms of the experience of "waiting": he says, "the fundamental flaw of the book *Being and Time* is perhaps that I ventured forth too far too early [ich mich zu früh zu weit vorgewagt habe]" (93; 7). This suggests that he did not "wait" enough. The experience of "waiting" is explored by Beckett and Blanchot as well; for example, in *Waiting for Godot* and in *L'Attente l'oubli*.

He asks, "What does the Japanese world understand by language? Asked still more cautiously: Do you have in your language a word for what we call language? If not, how do you experience what with us is called language?" (113; 23)

After this question, there is a long pause in the dialogue: the Japanese sinks into a long reflection, and silence prevails between the two speakers. Silence interrupts the dialogue. Even after resuming the conversation, he feels great hesitation in responding to the question and holds back the word for Japanese language experience, for he fears that his answer falls into the clutches of Western metaphysical concepts. But at the same time, he feels emboldened by the fact that the inquirer has spoken "a freeing word" – "hint [Wink]" – when describing his phrase "house of Being" as what gives "a hint of the nature of language" (114; 24). But the Japanese still continues to "hold back the word that is to be said [das zu-sagende Wort zurückzuhalten]." This echoes the sense of "testing" that we have discussed – "anticipation in reserve [das Zuvorkommen in der Zurückhaltung]." The following passage depicts the experience of "Zurückhaltung" as that of "keeping with the hints":

J: We understand only too well that a thinker would prefer to hold back the word that is to be said, not in order to keep it for himself, but to bear it toward his encounter with what is to be thought.

I: That is in keeping with the hints. They are enigmatic. They beckon to us. They beckon *away*. They beckon us *toward* that from which they unexpectedly bear themselves toward us. (26)

[J: Wir verstehen nur allzu gut, daß ein Denkender es vorziehen möchte, das zu-sagende Wort zurückzuhalten, nicht um es für sich zu behalten, sondern um es dem Denkwürdigen entgegenzutragen.

F: Dies entspricht den Winken. Sie sind rätselhaft. Sie winken uns *zu*. Sie winken *ab*. Sie winken uns *hin* zu dem, von woher sie unversehens sich uns zutragen. (117)]

"Hints" are enigmatic. And "hesitation" means trying to meet with the enigma of the hints. The German noun *Wink* means 'sign,' '(with the hand) wave,' '(with the eye) wink,' '(with the head) nod,' 'hint,' etc. The verb *winken* means 'to make a sign, signal,' '(with the hand) to wave, to beckon,' '(with the head) to nod,' etc. These senses suggest that "hints" are essentially linked to gestures,

body movements. The hints "*tragen*": they bear, transport, and endure the relation [Bezug] between man and Being as if they bore an invisible fruit. At the same time, the hints "beckon to" man, "beckon away," and "beckon him toward" the site of "Ereignis," of "what is to be thought" from which the hints are coming. The hints are in their "essence" the movement of going to and fro or approaching and retreating. It is this movement of the hints that "hesitation" tries to "keep with [entsprechen]" so that "the word that is to be said" can correspond to "what is to be thought." We should note here that the movement of the hints *emboldens* the Japanese while making him "*hesitate*": being asked by the inquirer why he hesitates if he feels emboldened, the Japanese says, "what emboldens me simultaneously makes me hesitate" (119). Thus the Japanese "goes to and fro only slowly" in his reflection, waiting for "a surprise" to come forth and "swing widely [weit auszuswingen]" (119; 27): the Japanese says to the inquirer, "the surprise . . . will strike you with the same force with which it is holding me captive" (119; 27). One can interpret the "surprise" as the enigma of hints coming from "the essence of language."

While the Japanese feels hesitation in keeping with the swinging rhythm of the hints, the inquirer experiences "agitation [Unruhe]": he says to the Japanese, "I shall not hide from you that you are throwing me into a state of great agitation [in eine große Unruhe]" (120; 28). He is greatly agitated by the hesitation of the Japanese. We notice that both hesitation and agitation are the swinging movement which corresponds to the swinging rhythm of hints: it is the movement of shaking one's own ground and of shifting positions which leads to the transformation of thinking. In fact, later, discussing the "belonging together of hermeneutics and language [Zusammengehörigkeit des Hermeneutischen und der Sprache]," the two speakers themselves say by turns:

I: The transformation [of thinking] occurs as a passage . . . [Die Wandlung geschieht als Wanderung . . .]

J: . . . in which one site [Ort] is left behind in favor of another . . .

I: . . . and that requires that the sites be placed in discussion [Erörterung].

J: One site [Ort] is metaphysics.

I: And the other? We leave it without a name. (138; 42)

We need to be careful not to interpret "leaving one site behind in favor of another" as one-way movement of leaving the site of Western metaphysics and going to the site of the nameless. Rather, the phrase indicates the experience of the *Schwingung*, of constantly going to and fro between the two asymmetrical sites. We can leave the site of metaphysics only because we direct it back within its boundaries (139; 42).<sup>16</sup> Even though the two speakers converse in German, the horizon of Japanese language constantly shakes that of German language as its other. They swing between two horizons of language, or between two "houses of Being;" this shakes and deconstructs a view that there are two separate "houses of Being." To put it in another way, the speakers experience not so much two "houses of Being" as the "between" itself, the interval, or the *Ab-grund*. To go back to their concern over the danger, one can say that this swinging movement in the form of a dialogue can bring them nearer to the danger *and* help them stave it off. This movement toward *and* away from danger or the transformation of thinking takes place in "discussion [Erörterung]," that is, in our walking toward the "site [Ort]" of the *Schwingung* of the fold.

At the same time, this swinging movement suspends the hermeneutic relation set up by the title of the text ("A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer") in which the inquirer questions the other, the Japanese. The pause in the dialogue, where the Japanese sinks into a long reflection, invites a long detour: the inquirer proposes to exchange roles, and he himself starts answering the question posed by the Japanese about hermeneutics (120; 28). This is an interruption of the hermeneutic relation itself where the inquirer is interrogated by the other, the person whom the inquirer is supposed to interrogate. The inquirer starts discussing hermeneutics in terms of man's "essence" of listening to the message, of being "the message-bearer of the message which the *Zwiefalt*'s unconcealment speaks to him" (136; 40). He argues that "the message-bearer" is "he who walks the boundary of the boundless [der Grenzgänger des Grenzenlosen]" (137; 41). This long detour triggers the

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<sup>16</sup> Speaking about his lecture "What is Metaphysics?" the inquirer states that it intends to "bring out the essence of metaphysics, and only thus bring metaphysics back within its own limits," and that "overcoming metaphysics" means only this, "neither a destruction nor even a denial of metaphysics" (109; 20).

Japanese thinker's speech: the Japanese starts describing *Iki* experience whose nature Kuki attempted to "translate" to the inquirer many years ago. "*Iki*" is depicted as "the breath of the stillness of luminous delight [das Wehen der Stille des leuchtenden Entzückens]" (141; 44), or "the pure delight of the beckoning stillness [das reine Entzücken der rufenden Stille]" (142; 45).

The inquirer tries to "give ear to [zuhören]" the words of the Japanese: he himself tries to keep the attitude of "the message-bearer" "who walks the boundary of the boundless" [der Grenzgänger des Grenzenlosen] that he just described as man's "essence" in the discussion of hermeneutics. This attitude induces the Japanese to let "Koto ba", the Japanese word for "language" speak from itself. "Koto" is "the appropriating occurrence of the lightening message of grace [das Ereignis der lichtenden Botschaft der Anmut]" and "ba" is "leaves, including and especially the leaves of a blossom--petals [die Blätter, auch und zumal die Blütenblätter]" (142; 45). Therefore "Koto ba" is "the petals that stem from koto [Blütenblätter, die aus *Koto* stammen]" (144; 47).<sup>17</sup> Both speakers listen to its speaking and sense concealed "kinship" between "Koto ba" and the inquirer's word "Saying [Sage]": both "hint [erwinken]" "that which is like a saga [Sagenhafte]." According to the inquirer, "Saying" means to "show [zeigen]" in the sense of: let appear and let shine, but in the manner of hinting" (145; 47). The German word "zeigen" has a sense of 'to present or show' in a theater. The nature of hinting recognized in the kinship between "Koto ba" and "Sage" indicates

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<sup>17</sup> Tezuka, in one of the notes to the Japanese translation of "A Dialogue on Language," says that a Japanese would not think that "ba" in "Koto ba" means "flower petals," and that he did not say so in his dialogue with Heidegger. However he thinks that it is natural that when Heidegger heard the German word "Blätter," the senses of "leaves" and "petals" immediately occurred to him. Tezuka holds that this discrepancy is not a negative element, rather it may contribute to the productivity of the dialogue between different cultures. Tomio Tezuka, *Kotoba ni tuitte no taiwa*, pp. 133-134. The definition of "Koto ba" presented in the text hints Heidegger's interest in linking this word to the motif of language as flowers which is later discussed with Hölderlin's poems in "The Nature of Language": Heidegger recognizes the nature of language in Hölderlin's poetic word "the flower of the mouth" and associates it with important motifs of his thinking such as "the earth," "roots," "Saying," "the source," and "the sounding of the voice." Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, pp. 205-208; *On the Way to Language*, pp. 98-101. Graham Parkes points out the connection between the definition of "Koto ba" and Hölderlin's words "the flower of the mouth" in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, p. 214. Also Robert Mugerauer shows how the speaking of language takes place as "a flowering flourishing" in the dialogue in *Heidegger's Language and Thinking*, pp. 56-61.

the theatrical aspect of language. Both "Koto ba" and "Sage," in their hinting, *stage* that which is at once a trace and a herald of "the *Zwiefalt*'s unconcealment."

The dialogue presented in the text is not a mere exchange of words between two speakers whose mother tongues are different from each other. The dialogue lets the relation of "nearness/farness" between two "houses of Being" announce itself, and directs back the phrase "house of Being" into its fundamental nature of "bearing up" the relation of "nearness / farness" between man and Being. The "difference" of the nature of language between two "houses of Being" presented at the beginning of the dialogue is not to be understood to mean that each of the two so-called "natural languages" exists independently in each culture and the two differ from each other. The "difference" or the alterity of the other hints at the relation of "nearness / farness" as such. The "difference" or "farness" is nothing but "a concealed kinship" or "nearness." Responding to the inquirer's explanation of the hermeneutics, the Japanese says, "I sense a deeply concealed kinship in our thinking, precisely because your path of thinking and its language are so wholly other" (136; 40-41). In the same fashion, the "kinship" does not mean "a general concept under which both the European and the East Asian languages could be subsumed" (115; 24).

The relation of "nearness / farness" can be grasped in light of the swinging movement of the hints. The swinging movement of the hints simultaneously exposes and maintains the concealed secret of language, the concealed relation of "nearness / farness" between man and Being. Playing the role of an intermediary between man and Being, the hints transmit to man the *Schwingung* of language, i.e. that of Being, and convey back man's swinging in hesitation and agitation to Being. Here man's swinging, that is, hesitation and agitation, can be seen as his responding or corresponding to Being. This is exactly what Heidegger hints by the phrase "anticipation in reserve [das Zuvorkommen in der Zurückhaltung]" in asserting the need of "testing." One could say that the relation between man and Being exists in and as the movement of *Schwingung*.

Thus, in the present dialogue, thinking that occurs between the two ("gesprächsweise denken") appears as hesitation and agitation. The movement of hesitation and agitation is the gesture of "bearing [tragen]" the enigma of the "weight," the "weight" of the essence of language, the relation between man and



Being. Bearing the enigma of the "weight" is linked to the idea of "courage," more precisely, the courage to face danger. It is the courage to face danger that underlies the swinging movement of hesitation and agitation, "the manner [Weise]" in which man responds to Being.<sup>18</sup>

### The *Form* of the Fold

"A Dialogue on Language," which can be considered to reveal language as the balance that Heidegger constitutes, seeks to "show" the *form* of the fold by turning itself into the *form* of the fold. In other words, the dialogue "stands" as the *form* of the *Zwiefalt* — "die forma, die Gestalt des Gefüge." Or it "stands" as the form that comes out of the movement of the *Zwiefalt*, the *moira*.

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<sup>18</sup> Here we should note that the idea of "courage" is linked to Heidegger's political thinking, which is based on what Lacoue-Labarthe calls "the onto-mythology." In "L'onto-mythologie de Heidegger" presented at University of Tokyo in 1998, Lacoue-Labarthe calls into question the idea of the poet's "courage" in Heidegger's understanding of Hölderlin. He argues that it is linked to the politics based on the onto-mythology. As seen in Heidegger's commentary on Hölderlin and poetry, especially in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry," courage involves facing danger — the responsibility of beginning a people's history, which is linked to such ideas as hero, *Gestalt*, example, figure. The essence of poetry, art, and language involves "founding the beginning of another history." Lacoue-Labarthe discusses how in Heidegger the essence of language, *lesein*, language as the gathering of "there is" (Zeichen, Zeigen, Nennen) is inseparable from myth.

The theological-political assigns poetry a mission, a combat, a task of facing danger; this mission is an absolute necessity. This mission, which is based on the courage of the poet who faces danger, has an archi-ethical quality. This mission is also linked to a transcendental responsibility, to the possibility of a history for the people: what is at stake is whether the Germans can enter into history and open a history, like the Greeks, and become the Germans. The poet is considered as a hero, an example, a figure — a *Gestalt*. It is the figure of the hero of poetry, of half-god, mediator between the gods and the men, the immortals and the mortals. In this lecture, Lacoue-Labarthe contrasts the poet's courage in Heidegger's understanding of Hölderlin with that in Benjamin's understanding of Hölderlin (to be more precise, Benjamin's reading of two poems by Hölderlin, "The Poet's Courage [Dichtermut]" and "Timidity [Blödigkeit]"); Lacoue-Labarthe does not merely "compare" the two interpretations. He holds that, in Benjamin, "courage" involves "deposing of the mythological," passivity, sobriety, and prose. The courage of poetry is the courage to leave the mythological, to separate from it, and deconstruct it. Lacoue-Labarthe cites Benjamin: "The contemplation of the poetized [das Gedichtete], however, leads not to the myth but rather -in the greatest creations — only to mythic connections, which in the work of art are shaped into unique, unmythological, and unmythic forms that cannot be better understood by us." Walter Benjamin, "Two Poems by Friedrich Hölderlin" in *Selected Writings*, Volume 1. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 35. Also see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Il faut," trans. Jeff Fort, *qui parle*, Vol. 10, No. 2 Spring/Summer 1997, pp. 33-60.

We recall here the following exchange between the two interlocuters who are discussing the sense of the phrase "man stands in hermeneutical relation to the *Zwiefalt*":

J: Man stands "in relation" [Der Mensch steht <im Bezug>] then means the same as: Man *is* really as man when needed and used by [<im Brauch>] . . .

I: . . . what calls on man to preserve the *Zwiefalt* . . .

J: . . . which, as far as I can see, cannot be explained in terms of presence, nor in terms of present beings, nor in terms of the relation of the two.

I: Because it is only the *Zwiefalt* itself which unfolds the clarity, that is, the clearing in which present beings as such, and presence, can be discerned by man . . .

J: . . . by man who by nature stands in relation to, that is, is being used by, the *Zwiefalt*. (126; 32-33)

The *Zwiefalt* is described as "the sway of usage [das Walten des Brauches]." What is said about the essence of "man" could be applied to the present dialogue. The dialogue itself "stands" "in relation to, that is, is being used by" the *Zwiefalt*, by the sway of usage, while preserving the *Zwiefalt*, which also means, preserving a message. The dialogue "stands" as the form of the *Zwiefalt*. In other words, it "stages" the *morphe* of the limit, "an emerging placing-itself-in-the-limit."

In this respect, one could say that "A Dialogue on Language" "stands" as if it were a *Grabstein*, a tombstone, and that the letters are inscribed in the text as if they were a *Grabschrift*, an epitaph (die Sage). The dialogue preserves the unfolding movement of the *Zwiefalt*. It tries to construct itself as a monument which preserves the memory of danger. We remember here that the dialogue indeed "begins" with photographs of Kuki's tomb [Grabstein] that "stands" in a temple garden in Kyoto, together with a reference to the epitaph [Grabschrift]. In this dialogue / tombstone which "stands" as the *form* of the fold, the fold appears as "nearness." And we recognize two kinds of "nearness" which are inseparable from each other. One reveals itself in a relation between the German language and the Japanese language, between two different "houses of Being." The other characterizes a relation between man and Being. This dialogue has an interesting structure in which the former "nearness" between two language

horizons discloses the latter "nearness" between man and Being. According to Heidegger, the "nearness" does not mean "nearness" understood by calculative thinking which considers space and time in terms of parameters. It means "bringing near the far as the far" in preserving "farness" in itself, or "presencing nearness in nearing the farness." This relation of "nearness" presences itself only by impinging on us in its "farness." For example, we find "nearness," in Heidegger's thinking, in the "neighborhood" between poetry and thinking, the "nearness" between man and Being, the "dif-ference" between world and things, to name a few.

The dialogue tries to preserve this double-fold "nearness / farness." It does so in the redoubling movement of the dialogue itself.

In the text, after "Koto ba" and "die Sage" appear as hints in the dialogue, there is an occasion for self-reflection by the dialogue. The dialogue comes back to the question of dialogue itself:

J: Wherever the nature of language [das Wesen der Sprache] were to speak (say) to man as Saying, *it*, Saying, would bring about the real dialogue [das eigentliche Gespräch] . . .

I: . . . which does not say "about" language but *of / coming from* language, as needfully used of its very nature [das nicht <über> die Sprache, sondern *von* ihr, als von ihrem Wesen gebraucht, sagte.]

J: And it would also remain of minor importance whether the dialogue is before us in writing, or whether it was spoken at some time and has now faded.

I: Certainly--because the one thing that matters is whether this dialogue, be it written or spoken or neither, remains constantly coming. [Gewiß – weil alles daran liegt, ob dieses eigentliche Gespräch, mag es geschrieben und gesprochen sein oder nicht, fortwährend im Kommen bleibt.]

J: The course [Gang] of such a dialogue would have to have a character all its own, with more silence than talk.

I: Above all, silence about silence. . .

J: Because to talk and write about silence [das Reden und Schreiben über das Schweigen] is what produces the most obnoxious chatter . . .

I: Who could simply be silent of silence?

J: That would be authentic saying . . . [Dies müßte das eigentliche Sagen sein . . .]

I: . . . and would remain the constant prologue to the authentic dialogue of / coming from language. [und das stete Vorspiel zum eigentlichen Gespräch von der Sprache bleiben.]

(152; 52-53)

The inquirer holds that what matters most is whether the dialogue "remains constantly coming [fortwährend im Kommen bleibt]" and that to think in dialogue is to "simply be silent of silence" which remains "constant prologue [Vorspiel] to the authentic [eigentlich] dialogue of / coming from [von] language." This suggests that a dialogue should remain open to a dialogue that is *yet to come* from "the essence of language" which always withdraws itself. A dialogue is always *provisional*, always waiting for itself, whose arrival is infinitely deferred and postponed. It is constantly redoubling itself in that it reveals itself as a difference from itself, as "nearness / farness" to itself. One can say that this redoubling movement of the dialogue guards "nearness / farness" between man and Being in the same way that its swinging movement preserves "nearness/farness" by swinging to and fro in time with the rhythm of the beckoning hints: redoubling and swinging are indistinguishable from each other.

The movement of the dialogue which redoubles itself is characterized as "the constant prologue [Vorspiel] to the authentic dialogue of / coming from [von] language." The dialogue reveals the relation of "nearness / farness" as "Vorspiel."<sup>19</sup> The German noun "Spiel" means 'playing, acting, performance' in a theatrical context, 'manner of playing, execution, touch' in a musical context, 'gambling,' 'play, sport,' 'game,' etc. The prefix "vor" means 'before, in front of, ahead of' in reference to place, 'before, prior to, in advance, preparatory' in reference to time. In Heidegger's thinking, "vor" is linked to "the way," the lasting element in thinking: walking "forward [vorwärts]" on the way of thinking

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<sup>19</sup> In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger writes, "What we experience in the frame [Ge-Stell] as the constellation of Being and man through the modern world of technology is a *prelude* [Vorspiel] to what is called the event of appropriation [Ereignis]." Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*, p. 25; *Identity and Difference*, pp. 36-37. "Vorspiel" indicates the possibility that the frame [Ge-Stell] will disclose itself as the event of Appropriation [Ereignis].

is at once walking "backward [rückwärts]." "Vor" implies not mere advancing but walking "into that nearest nearness [in jenes Nächste]" "which we constantly rush ahead of, and which strikes us as strange [befremdet] each time anew when we catch sight of it" (99; 12). Thus "Vorspiel" designates a "Spiel" which walks on the way to "the nearest nearness." In other words, it is a "Spiel" prior to the arrival of another "Spiel," its other which will come to us as "a surprise." The occurrence of "Vorspiel" is always provisional and preparatory to the arrival of another "Spiel" that has not yet come to pass but will be coming from the "essence" of language.<sup>20</sup> "Vorspiel" is anticipation. It is in this sense that the "course [Gang]" of a dialogue is called "the constant prologue to the authentic dialogue [das stete Vorspiel zum eigentlichen Gespräch]."

This movement of "Vorspiel" can be understood in terms of theatrical performance and musical performance. In regard to the theatrical sense, one could say that the dialogue stages the peculiar relation revealed in the prefix "Vor-" of "Vorspiel," or the "nearness / farness" between "Spiel" and "Vorspiel." It is only by staging itself that the dialogue reveals its "essence," the relation of "nearness / farness." At the same time, the redoubling movement of the dialogue has the nature of musical performance. The movement of the dialogue, including the movement of interlocutors and hints, takes place only insofar as it is in tune with the rhythm of the dialogue which is yet to come, i.e., in time with the rhythm of moving stillness. We recognize that, at this point, the inquirer replaces "dialogue" with "silence": the movement of the "dialogue" is now called "silence about silence" which is essentially different from "chatter," what talking and writing about silence produces. The movement of the dialogue can be

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<sup>20</sup> Reading de Man's works, Hamacher shows how the notions of "Vor-Spiel" and "Vorläufigkeit [the temporary and provisional]" are related to the performative act of promising. He writes, "The promise promises itself – that always means: the promise, in a not yet constituted language, does not yet promise anything other than its own future: the promise does not promise. Language for de Man is just such a promise." The sentence, "the promise does not promise" and its "irony" involve the operation in which the fulfillment of the promise is infinitely postponed and deferred. Werner Hamacher, "LECTIO: De Man's Imperative," in *Reading De Man Reading*, edited by Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 198. In describing the experience of being placed "before the law," Derrida discusses a very similar enigma of temporality revealed as the infinite deferral of entry into the law itself; Jacques Derrida, "Before the Law" in *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 181-220.

viewed as the playing of music, but the music is silence itself. Within this movement, the two speakers try to "be silent about silence" in being attuned to the secret rhythm which is to come *from* language, instead of attempting to speak *about* the nature of language. The inquirer says, "we may confidently entrust ourselves to the hidden drift [verborgenen Zug] of our dialogue" (123; 30). To briefly return to the theme of "testing of language" (i.e. weighing language), we can say now that testing occurs not only in and as the swinging movement but also in and as the redoubling movement. In the redoubling movement that the word "Vorspiel" hints at, man anticipates the infinitely deferred arrival of Being. And this takes place in a dialogue. The dialogue as the site of testing reveals the redoubling "essence" of the relation between man and Being, while the dialogue itself redoubles itself and shows itself as the *form* of the fold.

This idea of the dialogue as the *form* of the fold might echo the following sentence by Jean-Luc Nancy. "The dialogue is both the enigma and the figure of the enigma."<sup>21</sup> Reading "A Dialogue on Language," he observes that a dia-logue is "the *theia moira* (divine fate) of logos," "*hermeneia*," or "the sharing of logos" ("dia-" signifies that which shares and divides). The "*theia moira*" means "the lot [the sharing] which befalls each poet — one's fate (*Moirai*) as poet, of *this* poet — and the fate of the divine itself": the divine here means "what gives itself, what divides itself in voice and in *hermeneia*. What signifies 'en-thusiasm'." Nancy writes, while speaking of *Ion* (Plato's dialogue reinscribed in Heidegger's dialogue) and paying attention to the rhapsode (who doubles the poet, restores the poet in his verse, in making him speak in his own words): "the *dunamis theia* [divine power] and *theia moira* [divine fate] communicate through the subsequent rings: the rhapsode is himself . . . inspired, enthusiastic, and *destined* to the *interpretation* of a singular poet." He describes how in Plato's *Ion* the "divine power" or the force of magnetism passes through the unchained rings ("a very long series of rings suspended from one another"). Hermeneutics, "the art of understanding well the discourse of another," is performed in the work of art which is the "Dialogue." Thus, according to Nancy, what is staged in the present

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<sup>21</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le partage des voix*; "Sharing Voices" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context*, pp. 211-259.

"Dialogue" is "dialogicity" itself, or hermeneutics itself: "*Das Gespräch spricht von sich selbst*: the dialogue speaks of itself, from itself." " 'Heidegger' miming 'Plato,' and reinscribing Plato's dialogue in his conversation, does not allow for anything other than a new dividing, the multiplying of the hermeneutic voice, between the voices, the roles, the scenes, the dialogues." Referring to *Ion*, Nancy says that the hermeneut has a knowledge about a "form" (not about "content") and "the knowledge of *meaning in a single form*." The dialogue which reveals itself as "both the enigma and the figure of the enigma" (as " a very long series of rings suspended from one another," as the sharing or the multiplication of our voices) "shows" the *form* of "the *theia moira* (divine fate) of logos."

### Temporal Enigma - Temporality of *Vorspiel*

The redoubling structure disclosed by the word "Vorspiel" invokes the question of temporality. This question is thematized at the end of the dialogue where the dialogue itself experiences the strange temporality that it seeks to describe. The Japanese says, "It seems to me as though even we, now, instead of speaking about language, had tried to take some steps along a course [Gang] which entrusts itself to the nature of language." The inquirer responds, "Let us be glad if it not only seems so but *is* [*ist*] so": let us note the emphasis on "is." The two speakers are not sure whether in fact they have taken some steps along the course to language or not. It seems that this question is less important than the question of temporality opened up by the phrase "if . . . it *is* so."

Supposing that the speakers have been walking along the messenger's course, that is, speaking *from* language instead of speaking *about* language, the dialogue asks what takes place in that case:

I: Then the farewell of all "It is" comes to pass. [Dann ereignet sich der Abschied von allem <Es ist>.]

J: But you do not think of the farewell as a loss and denial, do you?

I: In no way.

J: But?

I: As the coming of what has been. [Als die Ankunft des Gewesen.]

J: But what is past, goes, has gone--how can it come?

I: The passing of the past is something else than what has been. [Das

Vergehen ist anderes als das Gewesen.]

J: How are we to think that?

I: As the gathering of what endures . . . [Als die Versammlung des Währenden . . .]

J: . . . which, as you said recently, endures as what grants endurance [währt als das Gewährende] . . .

I: . . . and stays the Same [das Selbe] as the message . . .

J: . . . which *needs* us as messengers. [die uns als Botengänger *braucht*.]

(154-155; 54)

The dialogue hints at an event in which "the farewell of all 'It is' [der Abschied von allem <Es ist>]" comes to pass. This enigmatic event is depicted as "the coming of what has been [die Ankunft des Gewesen]," not as a loss or denial of "It is." And the inquirer says that "das Gewesen" in the phrase "the coming of what has been [die Ankunft des Gewesen]" is different from "das Vergehen." If we take into account the fact that the German word 'Vergehen' means 'disappearance, passing,' 'lapse of time,' and interestingly 'offense, transgression,' then we can interpret the inquirer's words to mean that "das Gewesen" is more originary than "das Vergehen," which sets our customary understanding of time as passing, where one perceives that a present event passes or disappears into the past. In addition, we can read them to mean that "das Vergehen" commits an offense or transgression against the law of temporality revealed in the phrase "the coming of what has been." Being something else than "das Vergehen" and defined as "the gathering of what endures," "das Gewesen" indicates that "the event of appropriation [Ereignis]," which simultaneously grants and gathers what endures, has *already* taken place and no longer "is." And "the coming" in "the coming of what has been [die Ankunft des Gewesen]" means that what has *already* taken place, namely, "das Ereignis" *will* arrive. It is yet to come. Again this "coming [Ankunft]" is not to be understood in terms of common-sense perception of time, i.e. of future.<sup>22</sup> Thinking in this way, one can read the phrase

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<sup>22</sup> As the inquirer says, "the message-bearer must come from the message. But he must also have gone toward it" (150; 51), man who senses "the coming" of the message as a message-bearer must have already reached the source of the message. This temporal paradox of "coming of what has been" determines our thinking as "a leap." In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger holds, that



"the farewell [Abschied] of all 'It is'" as the rift, separation, or difference from the ground on which time is perceived as parameters, as the sequence of nows, that is, from the ground on which "it is" is possible. The dialogue itself falls into this temporal enigma of "the coming of what has been" by supposing or anticipating that it "has spoken from" language on the way to language and has been open to the constant coming of another dialogue.

This problem of temporality, disclosed as "the farewell of all 'It is,'" is essentially linked to the self-withdrawing nature of "das Ereignis" discussed in "Time and Being." This text explains how in "das Ereignis" "it" gives or sends Being as "destiny" and time as "extending." In this context, Heidegger brings up the motif of "the withholding of the present" as follows: "[T]o giving as sending there belongs keeping back--such that the denial of the present, and the withholding of the present, play within the giving of what has been and what will be. [[Z]um Geben als Schicken das Ansichhalten gehört, nämlich dieses, da\_ im Reichen von Gewesen und Ankommen Verweigerung von Gegenwart und Vorenthalten von Gegenwart spielen.]"<sup>23</sup> He adds that "das Ereignis" withdraws what is most fully its own from unconcealment, or it "expropriates itself of itself [enteignet sich seiner selbst]": "Expropriation [die Enteignis]" belongs to "das Ereignis."<sup>24</sup> This shows that "the denial of the present," i.e. "the farewell of all 'It is'" essentially belongs to the self-withdrawing nature of "Ereignis," which is simultaneously "the giving of what has been and what will be [Reichen von Gewesen und Ankommen]."

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"a leap [Sprung]" is "always a head start, in which everything to come is already leaped over, even if as something disguised." *Holzwege*, p. 62; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 76. Blanchot is also interested in the nature of "a leap" and explores it in terms of the limit experience: "there would be no limit if the limit were not passed, revealed as impassable by being passed." Maurice Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969, p. 634; *The Infinite Conversation*. Translated by Susan Hanson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 433. Also he writes, "the limit . . . could inscribe itself only on the basis of its own crossing--the crossing of the uncrossable [la franchissement de l'infranchissable]." Maurice Blanchot, *Le pas au-delà*. Paris: Gallimard, 1973, p. 66; *The Step Not Beyond*. Translated by Lycette Nelson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969, p. 23; *On Time and Being*. Translated by J. Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23; trans., pp. 22-23.

We feel tempted to grasp this problem of temporality brought up by the phrase "the coming of what has been" in light of the notion of "the hermeneutic circle" which Heidegger introduces in *Being and Time*. In Section 32 "Understanding and Interpretation," he shows how any interpretation must have already understood what is to be interpreted, and examines how the hermeneutic circle operates in the existential "fore-structure" of *Dasein*, whose Being is defined by the questioning of its Being. He stresses that "what is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way."<sup>25</sup> Thus "the hermeneutic circle" is discussed in terms of the existential constitution of *Dasein* for which its Being is itself an issue.

However, in "A Dialogue on Language," the inquirer mentions that his earlier view of the hermeneutic circle should be abandoned "insofar as the talk of a circle continually remains superficial [vordergründig bleibt]": the inquirer does not think that "the notion of the accepted circle gives us an originary experience of the hermeneutic relation." Moreover, being asked "how would you present [darstellen] the hermeneutic circle today?," he says, "I would avoid a presentation [eine Darstellung] as resolutely as I would avoid speaking *about* [über] language." Then he suggests that only a dialogue, a dialogue altogether *sui generis*, can correspond to the hermeneutic relation (151; 51-2). These words of the inquirer suggest that the notion of "the hermeneutic circle" stays at the level of "presentation [Darstellung]" or stays literally "in the foreground or superficial [vordergründig]," and that it cannot correspond to the nature of the hermeneutic relation between man and Being.

But why does the text say that a dialogue altogether *sui generis* corresponds to the hermeneutic relation while the accepted notion of "the hermeneutic circle" does not? One could say that it is because, for Heidegger, a dialogue can stage the temporal enigma revealed in the hermeneutic relation, while the accepted notion of the hermeneutic circle cannot. In the dialogue, the temporal enigma, the "weight" of time, is placed on a balance. The temporality itself, all "It is," is shaken in the *Schwingung* of the balance and put on trial, and "the farewell of all 'It is'" comes to pass as "the coming of what has been," as the temporality of

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, p. 153; *Being and Time*, p. 195.

"Vorspiel." This disclosure of the temporal enigma is essentially related to the unconcealment of the hermeneutic relation and of "the essence of language."

Thus, the dialogue which moves in the temporality of "Vorspiel" speaks as the question of temporality itself. It exists as the temporal enigma — "the coming of what has already been," the *Gefüge* in time between what has already been and what is to come. The joint within time which is out of joint. It remains as the meeting place, the site of dialogue between "no longer" and "not yet." Like a tombstone.

### The Pursuit of Occasion

"A Dialogue on Language" hints at the necessity of constituting language as a balance. It is the necessity of refusing every measure, or the necessity of thinking at the point where all existing scales of measurement are refused. It is important to affirm this refusal which is essential to Heidegger's thought. But at the same time, we should be aware of the fact that this refusal contains within itself the possibility of danger. Heidegger's thought reveals the ironic possibility that a thought which seeks to stave off "danger" falls into another danger. In his case, danger is found in his project for constituting language as the balance in order to weigh the fold. To borrow Beckett's words, we might say that it is found in his "pursuit of occasion"<sup>26</sup>: Heidegger pursues occasion for "building" language as the balance. He pursues the movement of *Schwingung* as an occasion for the speaking of language, as the possibility of Saying [Sage].<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Beckett writes, "It is obvious that for the artist obsessed with his expressive vocation, anything and everything is doomed to become occasion, including, as is apparently to some extent the case with Masson, the pursuit of occasion. . . ." Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta*. London: John Calder, 1983, p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Here we recall Lacoue-Labarthe's view concerning Heidegger's "affirmation of original or transcendental character of *technē*, language, and poetry." At the beginning of his lecture, "La poétique de l'histoire" (Waseda University, Tokyo, 1999) which is about Heidegger's blindness or exclusion with regard to Rousseau, Lacoue-Labarthe holds that Heidegger's thought is fundamentally "une pensée de l'originarité de la *tekhnē*" or a thought which affirms the original or transcendental character of *technē* (i.e. language as poetry). He describes how Heidegger's course on Hölderlin (on *Germanien* and *Der Rhein*) given in 1934-35 cannot be thought of without a philosophical proposition: "la Poésie, c'est-à-dire l'art en son essence, indissociablement langue et mythe (*Sprache und Sage*), est la condition de possibilité, ou l'origine, de l'Histoire comme telle. . . ." He says later, "c'est sur le fond d'une telle affirmation, absolument paradoxale si l'on veut, du caractère originaire

Indeed it is not impossible to think of "A Dialogue on Language" as Heidegger's "pursuit of occasion" for his thought's "self-assertion"; for example, we could say that what Heidegger wanted in writing this dialogue was the chance to "show" the "weight" of the fold, danger *as* danger, or "the essence of language." It is hard to rule out the possibility that otherness or "difference" is being "used" by Heidegger as an occasion to "show" or "let-lie-before" what his thought seeks to "show." In other words, there is a lingering possibility that, for Heidegger's thought, otherness, whether it is revealed in the dialogue with poetry or with "non-Western" thought, is received as an occasion for constituting his language / world; it is simultaneously an occasion for avoiding what Heidegger calls "danger."

Fynsk suggests that Heidegger's recourse to the concept of dialogue is to be understood in terms of Heidegger's belief that we can only have access to the speaking of language by way of a countering, "*einander gegenüber*." For example, in "Language" Heidegger ostentatiously calls attention to the philosophical character of his own language, that is, to the difference between two different modes of speaking, poetry and philosophy, so that we can find a site where language speaks through the difference. It is through "a kind of *countering*," "*einander gegenüber*," or by way of the other, that each can hear its speaking. Fynsk writes, "The crucial point is that language gives itself *as language*, that is, as speaking, only by way of a kind of contrast, or countering, that is, in and through the *difference* between modes of speaking."<sup>28</sup>

We could say that what Heidegger pursues, in staging "a kind of 'countering,' *einander gegenüber*," is an occasion for the speaking of language. It is hard to exclude completely the possibility that Heidegger's thought pursues and appropriates the other as an occasion for its own expressive possibility. Or it freezes itself or turns away from the foreignness of the other, "difference" as such, or the unsettling force of the encounter with the other.

We might be able to relate this "pursuit of occasion" for the speaking of

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ou transcendante de la *tekhnè* (Langue et Poésie, ou Langue comme Poésie) que Heidegger entreprend la lecture du poème *Le Rhin* . . . ." He adds later, "elle [Heidegger's thought] ne peut pas prendre appui sur une détermination dérivée et affaiblie, trop élémentaire et trop 'naïve,' de la *phusis* — de la 'Nature,' entre guillemets, dans son concept latin (et français)."

<sup>28</sup> Christopher Fynsk, *Language and Relation: . . . that there is language*, pp. 20-21.

language that we see in Heidegger to what Luce Irigaray calls "the forgetting of air." "*I breathe, therefore, I am* is forgotten in Being's *ek-sistance*," writes Irigaray in *L'oubli de l'air chez Martin Heidegger*.<sup>29</sup> She criticizes Heidegger's "forgetting of air" here. The forgetting involves the exclusion of "air" which she links to the imposing of a power or the sexual project for auto-production. "Air" is described as "a veiled mystery — with which he has made himself man," or as "the mystery of a difference that is irreducible to sameness." It belongs to "the elementality of *physis*" — air, water, earth, fire. It is also inseparable from what Irigaray calls "she" — "an ungraspable unknown female one that opposes the proper yet contributes to its constitution," "mute unknown female one that opens the *logos* onto the abyss of what it does not say." According to Irigaray, "she" subsists as "the modest back-and-forth motion, which takes place prior to all phenomena and all designation," as "neither . . . nor . . ." "She" is ajar in all dimensions and remains threshold. It is "the back-and-forth motion within her, between her and her" which constitutes a kind of base without closure, the dimension of to-ing and fro-ing which is neither closed nor open. "Her" motion is the condition of possibility of all phenomena, relation and names, as the "cradle of the event."

Irigaray holds that "air" or "she" (her "modest back-and-forth motion") is always already forgotten and reduced to nothingness by "his" own element: "his" language.

Without realizing that what he thus weaves — like a kind of bridge? Or a path that is lost in sameness — takes place only between him and himself. That she has always already become him in him, that he has always already assimilated her to himself: in his body and his language. That he is weaving, in a kind of glad mourning somewhere between expectation and memories, so that she no longer comes back.<sup>30</sup>

Thus "he" forgets "air" and tries to construct a world for himself, the temple that is sanctified, in and through language. "He" seeks to "bound and delimit the whole, like a solid envelope." "He" "obliterates, and, moreover, corrupts, the air

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<sup>29</sup> Luce Irigaray, *L'oubli de l'air chez Martin Heidegger*. Paris: Minuit, 1983; *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*. Translated by Mary Beth Mader. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45; trans., p. 45.

where he takes place, the air thanks to which he entered into presence." Irigaray points out that behind this "forgetting of air" there is fragility; "one whose erection is so fragile that its safeguarding requires a matrilineal encirclement." In brief, Irigaray criticizes Heidegger's project for constructing his own language which is based on "the forgetting of air," on the exclusion of that from which the foundation proceeds. She also suggests that this project is inseparable from its own fragility. According to her, in Heidegger, "there is only one language: his own. That outside his *noein, legein, einai, eon*. . . nothing is." He remains within its architectonics: the *logos*.

Irigaray's view invites us to pay attention to the delimiting nature of Heidegger's language. His language appropriates the movement of *Schwungung* as the balance which can have the controlling power.<sup>31</sup>

In this regard, we could say that we see *another* danger in Heidegger's thought, in the very thought that seeks to overcome what it considers as danger. This danger belongs not so much to the personality or the action of an individual as to a thought itself, a thought that refuses every measure. But it belongs to the movement of *Schwungung* as such. For the *Schwungung*, that is, the movement of the balance or that of the fold, always carries within itself the possibility of turning to or returning to the transcendence, the authority, the truth, or the governing power. In fact, it cannot be denied that we often hear the voice of the authority, of transcendence, in Heidegger's work. At the center of

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<sup>31</sup> Although I have emphasized Heidegger's project of constructing language as the "balance," we have to be aware that this project cannot be separated from the movement of his texts that unsettles the movement of construction without cease. In "The Noise at the Threshold," Christopher Fynsk describes how Heidegger's "performance" in his work shows that his work deconstructs itself constantly. According to him, while Heidegger's text "Language" constructs "a kind of allegory of poetic Saying" from a reading of Trakl's poem "A Winter Evening," there are possible disturbances introduced into language's articulation by the human word. Fynsk names these disturbances "the noise"; it "disrupts the harmonious articulation of the speaking of language and human speech, and thus disrupts the possibility of mourning." Fynsk writes, "Heidegger looks to poetry. . . for what Blanchot would describe as 'the possibility of dying.'" But Hölderlin experiences precisely the impossibility of such an assumption of mortality through poetic *Stiftung* ("founding") . . . In Heidegger, the way to language seems to lead inevitably to death in the sense of stillness (at least one powerful strain of his thinking takes that path, or takes its orientation from that possibility). But if we attend more to the noise in language than does Heidegger, very different paths will open" (37-38). Christopher Fynsk, *Language and Relation: . . . that there is language*, pp. 17-38.

Heidegger's thinking there is a danger of the imposing of a measure or of the "authorized speaking."<sup>32</sup>

This reminds us of one of the senses of "the balance [die Wage]" that Heidegger presents in "What Are Poets For?" — the measuring movement of oscillation. Heidegger writes, "The balance is the manner in which Being ever and again weighs beings, that is, keeps them in the motion of weighing. [Die Wage ist die Weise, wie das Sein je und je das Seiende wiegt, d.h. in der Bewegung des Wägens hält]." "The balance" is the *Weise* — the manner in which Being weighs and measures beings in shaking and rocking their ground. We find in this definition of "balance" the danger of the *Schwingung* of the fold. It is the possibility that weighing or measuring turns into the transcendental law, into the governing power.

What Beckett writes concerning Bram van Velde in "Three Dialogues," a text presented in the form of a dialogue, may be contrasted with the "pursuit of occasion" seen in Heidegger's language.<sup>33</sup> (I do not mean to give a mere comparison between Heidegger and Beckett / van Velde. Rather I would like to ask what the difference between the two points toward.) Beckett suggests that Bram van Velde was the first painter who is not concerned with "his expressive possibilities," the first who is detached from "the misapprehension. . . that its function [the function of painting] was to express, by means of paint." In this context, he states that van Velde was the first painter who painted in being bereft of "an occasion." He is not like the artist who is obsessed with his expressive

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<sup>32</sup> In "In the Name of Language," Fynsk says that it is impossible to exclude the possibility that Heidegger's own way is marked by "an overreaching." Fynsk suggests that Heidegger is clearly concerned with "controlling the difference between proper and improper," and that he "presume[s] to govern the play of language." Also he points out that "Heidegger has made it clear that danger is unavoidable and, as such, to be assumed" ("Thought will always involve overreaching if it is to be thought.") Fynsk then presents what he describes as "an essential aspect of the 'ethics' of deconstruction as a practice of language." He writes, "Hence the necessity of recognizing and assuming the always *singular* character of the language of thought: both its evenemential nature and its strangeness, its *wanting*. The task for thought is to maintain a *free usage* of its language. . . : to presume to think (or answer to) the difference, while recognizing that there is no 'authorized' speaking in the name of difference." Christopher Fynsk, *Language and Relation: . . . that there is language*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta*, pp.142-145.

vocation, for whom "anything and everything is doomed to become occasion, including . . . the pursuit of occasion":

B. — I suggest that van Velde is the first whose painting is bereft, rid if you prefer, of occasion in every shape and form, ideal as well as material, and the first whose hands have not been tied by the certitude that expression is an impossible act.

The work which is bereft of occasion is the work which is faithful to "the sense of failure," the sense that is inseparable from the senses of instability, invalidity, and inadequacy. In fact, van Velde is said to be "the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world and the shrink from it desertion, art and craft, good housekeeping, living."

The fidelity to failure is the fidelity to something that undoes the possibility of expression itself, the possibility of art, or "the possibility of mourning." Or it is the fidelity to a certain dimension that is deprived of any means of expression or certitude of every relation. It is the helpless experience of vacillation between the inability to act *and* the obligation to act.

B. — The situation is that of him who is helpless, cannot act, in the event cannot paint, since he is obliged to paint. The act is of him who, helpless, unable to act, acts in the event paints, since he is obliged to paint.

D. — Why is he obliged to paint?

B. — I don't know.

D. — Why is he helpless to paint?

B. — Because there is nothing to paint and nothing to paint with.