

Laura Sanò

## Heidegger Attuned to Bach.

### Thought and Affectivity in *Being and Time*

#### 1.

“What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?”<sup>1</sup>. As told by Apollodorus, Oedipus solved the celebrated riddle posed by the Sphinx, answering that there could be no doubt that it referred to man<sup>2</sup>. The Sphinx, who had learned the riddle from the song of the Muses, was aghast at such quick-wittedness and fled, throwing herself off Mount Phicium.

By contrast, the mystery surrounding Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Art of Fugue* is still far from being cleared up. The numbers in the question asked of Oedipus match perfectly with those in the *Art of Fugue*: the being with four, two and three feet “is reflected in the pattern of voices envisaged in the piece, which consists of counterpoints in three and four parts and of two-part canons”<sup>3</sup>.

According to Aristotle, the nature of a riddle is to “attach impossibilities to a description of real things”<sup>4</sup>. The connection between philosophy and riddle has been documented by a number of sources, start-

<sup>1</sup> Apoll. *Library*, book III, chapter 5, section 8: see Apollodoro, *I Miti greci (Biblioteca)*, edited by P. Scarpi and M. Grazia Ciani, Lorenzo Fondazione Valla-Arnoldo Mondadori, Milano 1996 (1997).

<sup>2</sup> See *ivi*, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> H.-E. Dentler, *L’Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un’opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, Italian translation from the original German by G. Bigatti, Skira, Milano 2000, p. 16: though this fascinating text (to which I will refer repeatedly in attempting to uncover the meaning of Bach’s *Art of Fugue*) is not available in English, I recommend it to the interested reader. As we will see, Hans-Eberhard Dentler argues that the *Art of Fugue* was written to illustrate Pythagorean philosophical principles, and thus in an attempt to emphasize the union between music, philosophy, mathematics and science. See also R. Vlad, *Bach, Bibbia, esoterismo* in Sundry Authors, *La musica e la Bibbia*, Garamond, Rome 1992. For a general treatment of Bach’s life and work, see A. Molteni, *Johann Sebastian Bach. La vita, le opere*, Edizioni Blues Brothers, Milano 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 22, p. 1458a 26, edited and translated by S. Halliwell, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 111.

ing from Pausanias, who notes that “In the days of old those Greeks who were considered wise spoke their sayings not straight out but in riddles”<sup>5</sup>. Clearchus of Soli, for his part, maintained that using riddles is a sign of philosophical and cultural education<sup>6</sup>.

But what is the connection between the philosophical riddle and Bach’s most mysterious work? In reality, there are several precise philosophical and mathematical connections underlying the enigmatic meaning of the *Art of Fugue*<sup>7</sup>.

In 1747, Bach became a member of the Correspondierende Societät der musikalischen Wissenschaften, founded in 1738 by his pupil and admirer Christoph Mizler. The Societät’s bylaws required that the members be versed in philosophy and mathematics in addition to having a knowledge of musical history, and faithfully retraced the Pythagorean view of music and listed its teachings. Mizler, in fact, had immersed himself in the Pythagorean sources, from which he took the theory of the reciprocal numerical ratios at the basis of every musical effect and sound. He strove to demonstrate that music, which is grounded in precise mathematical equilibria, should be an integral part of philosophical education<sup>8</sup>.

This centrality of the Pythagorean vision in the Society founded by Mizler (where he went by the name “Pythagoras”<sup>9</sup>) is the first prerequisite for understanding the *Art of Fugue*. And indeed, the score of what is considered the most complex and enigmatic of Bach’s works displays unmistakably Pythagorean features<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, VIII, 8, 3, tr. by W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1918, p. 381.

<sup>6</sup> See KP IV, 1334, 19-22. *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. Karl Müller, II, p. 302 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See H.-E. Dentler, *L’Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un’opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, cit., pp. 17 ff.

<sup>8</sup> In this connection, see Mizler’s doctoral dissertation: *Fremdschrifliche und gedruckte Documente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs*, eds. W. Neumann and H.J. Schulze, Leipzig, Bärenreiter und VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969; II, n. 349, p. 247.

<sup>9</sup> As was common among other societies and academies of the period, each member was assigned a pseudonym reflecting his personality (see H.-E. Dentler, *L’Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un’opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, cit., p. 31). “If we want to convince ourselves entirely of the musical truths, we must also add mathematical knowledge as the supreme degree of human learning. [...] Did the Pythagoreans not measure sounds in order to guide them in the exercise of music? [...] A mathematical knowledge of sounds thus shines a great light for the composer, albeit in mediated rather than immediate form, and is very useful in preparing a piece of music”, as Mizler writes in *Neu eröffnete Musikalische Bibliothek oder Gründliche Nachricht nebst unpartbeyischem Urtheil von musikalischen Schriften un Büchern*, ed. Lorenz Christoph Mizler, 4 vol., Leipzig, Im Verlag des Verfassers und bey Brauns Erben in Commission, 1736-1754, facsimile edition Hilversum Frits Knuf, 1966: here I, 4, pp. 56-57.

<sup>10</sup> See M. Bitsch, *J.S. Bach: L’Art de la Fugue: introduction, analyse et commentaires*, Durand, Paris 1967; P. de Bouchet, *Bach, la sublime armonia*, Universale Electa/Gallimard, Milano 1994.

Dating from 1749, the *Art of Fugue* was Bach's last annual contribution as a member of the Societät, though he was unable to complete it because of his deteriorating health and two unsuccessful operations on his eyes.

Bach's autograph score of the *Art of Fugue* is unsigned, untitled, and indicates neither instrumentation nor tempo. The lack of such information has given rise to a true enigma, and in this apparent strangeness scholars have seen an allusion to the riddle of Oedipus, as well as a revival of the Pythagorean usage of never showing the titles of written works<sup>11</sup>.

All the fugues in the first printed edition of 1751 bear the name *Contrapunctus*, from *punctus contra punctum*, a clear reference to the dualistic principle taken from Pythagorean thought of seeing opposites as "the principles of things"<sup>12</sup>. In the *Art of Fugue*

the dualistic principle embodied in the contrapuntal style comes powerfully to the fore in the principle of contrary motion. This more general notion embraces, alongside the conduct of the parts, whereby two voices can proceed in opposite directions, a series of other specific possibilities

such as the subject and its answer, fugues and counterfugues, augmentation and diminution, countersubjects and conceptual pairings<sup>13</sup>. Likewise, the principle of the "mirror fugue" draws on Pythagorean dualism, which posits a specular relationship between the archetype (*archetipos*) and its image (*eikon*). Symbolically, the fugue represents a flight, one voice fleeing before the other, reflecting its image.

The materials used in the *Art of Fugue* and the criteria organizing it are similarly elusive, and indeed impossible to pin down. Any reconstruction of how the musical numbers are divided and how they scan is necessarily hypothetical. In the piece, irreducibly fugitive elements determine the rhythm of a deliberately paradoxical structure, often compared to a labyrinth opening onto innumerable possibilities, a continual calling into question of the architectural premises, or, even better, a puzzle displayed through creative rules designed to illustrate varieties of different solutions that unfold through the heuristic use of the fugue.

The entire work starts from and develops a single theme, through monumentally intricate variations in just one key (D minor – an adaptation of the Dorian mode favored by Pythagoras), in canons that follow the dualistic

<sup>11</sup> See H.-E. Dentler, *L'Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un'opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, cit., pp. 54 ff.

<sup>12</sup> See *ivi*, p. 55. Cf also F. Busoni, *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig 1912.

<sup>13</sup> See H.-E. Dentler, *L'Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un'opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, cit., p. 54.

principle of counterpoint: here, the debt to the Pythagorean idea that all things have a single root in the one, in the monad, is fairly explicit<sup>14</sup>.

It is an extraordinary composition, a towering edifice erected through sophisticated intellectual games that are never mere virtuoso expedients, but fully a part of a drama, a wealth of emotional experience engendering a profound involvement on the one hand, and on the other an evasive turning-away.

The search for the essence of the *Art of Fugue* is the search for the idea, the meaning of the work. This search, however, would lead nowhere if the fundamental character of the *Art of Fugue* were to remain buried, as it is rooted in a Pythagorean philosophy and a musical theory hiding behind the mask of a particularly challenging philosophical puzzle.<sup>15</sup>

Undeniably, the *Art of Fugue* rests on specific Pythagorean schemata, and thus calls for an interpretation which is not only musical, but also philosophical.

## 2.

Note that, in Heidegger, all developments lead us back to the central theme of *Sein und Zeit* as in a sort of immense “Art of Fugue” [*Kunst der Fuge*], where the theme of Being is turned over and over in all its aspects, ranging ever wider, with infinite variations but also identical to itself, compelled to reveal all that it contains.<sup>16</sup>

“*Being and Time* can thus be considered as an immense *Art of Fugue*”. In these words, a young woman of Ukrainian origin who had been living as an émigrée in Paris for several years formulates an opinion that explicitly links the work Heidegger published in 1927 with the great German composer’s unfinished masterpiece. The interpretation thus proposed by Rachel Bepaloff may seem somewhat gratuitous, and in some ways even extravagant. At first glance, a comparison between a taxing philosophical text like Heidegger’s and a musical creation can only be a matter of extrinsic assonances, or, at best, no more than an evocative suggestion. And yet, when we enter into the merits of the letter where this parallel is

<sup>14</sup> See *ivi*, p. 64. See also H.-E. Dentler, *Il sacrificio musicale di Johann Sebastian Bach. La musica come specchio dell’armonia delle sfere*, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome 2013.

<sup>15</sup> H.-E. Dentler, *L’Arte della Fuga di Johann Sebastian Bach. Un’opera pitagorica e la sua realizzazione*, *cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> Bepaloff, *Su Heidegger*, ed., Italian translation and *Afterword* by L. Sanò, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2010, p. 22.

drawn, the outlook changes radically as a result of several specific considerations that deserve further analysis.

First, an aspect that is usually neglected but is of considerable importance should be borne in mind, viz., the fact that this letter sent by Rachel Bepaloff to Daniel Halévy in 1933 has been said to be the first mention of Heidegger in a French source<sup>17</sup>. Despite the prestige of the author who originated this claim, however, this primacy is not undisputed, given that Heidegger's name appears in a French text as early as 1930, when the sociologist George Gurvitch published a volume which sought to lay out a map of the German philosophy of his day<sup>18</sup>. We should also add that a few months before Bepaloff's letter-essay was published, an article by Emanuel Levinas<sup>19</sup> outlined with remarkable penetration several of the fundamental themes proposed in *Being and Time*.

Though imprecise (at least relatively, given that – aside from the publications mentioned above – we must wait until 1942 for the first work in French to deal with Heidegger's thought in a certain depth<sup>20</sup>), Jean Wahl's claim points to an unquestionable fact: the extraordinarily insightful reading of *Being and Time* proposed by a novice – as Rachel Bepaloff was at the time – who was only then making her debut on the stage of philosophical writing and had absolutely no relevant academic credentials. In other words, the French scholar's misstatement can be explained as the desire to draw attention to a text that was pioneering in every respect, in which Heidegger's work received one of its first (if not the very first) interpretations.

A second group of considerations relates to the merit of Rachel's interpretation. She moves with almost astonishing assurance through the

<sup>17</sup> See J. Wahl, *Préface to Le cheveaux de bois d'Amérique*, Lulliard, Paris 1955, p. VII., the French translation of *The Young Girl* by Bepaloff's daughter Naomi Levinson.

<sup>18</sup> The letter (R. Bepaloff, *Lettre à M. Daniel Halévy sur Heidegger*) was initially published in the "Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger", LVIII, 11-12, 1933, pp. 321-339; then in "Conférence", edited by J.-P. Halévy, 6, 1998, pp. 451-479, and lastly in a volume entitled *Sur Heidegger*, Editions de la revue Conférence, Paris 2009. An Italian translation – which will be referred to henceforth – of the text given in this volume, but collated with the text that appeared in 1933, is provided in R. Bepaloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit. See also L. Sanò, *Un pensiero in esilio. La filosofia di Rachel Bepaloff*, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Napoli 2007, pp. 51-63. The latter text also provides an overview of Bepaloff's thought.

<sup>19</sup> G. Gurvitch, *Les tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande*, Vrin, Paris 1930.

<sup>20</sup> E. Levinas, *Martin Heidegger et l'ontologie*, "Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger", 57 (1932), n. 3-4, March-April, pp. 395-431; a few years later, Levinas returned to these themes in *l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, Vrin, Paris 1939.

<sup>21</sup> See A. de Waehrens, *La philosophie de Martin Heidegger*, Editions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, Louvain 1942 (n. ed., ivi, 1967), containing an analytical commentary on *Being and Time* prior to the latter's translation into French; also see the interesting review by E. Bréhier in "Revue philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger", 1942-1943, pp. 165-169.

*ingens sylva* of Heideggerian terminology, grasping its semantic peculiarities with uncommon philological exactness. It is perhaps no exaggeration to think that, had not Bespaloff's letter-essay passed virtually unnoticed in the French cultural debate of the Thirties, her interpretation could well have made a substantial difference in the reception accorded to *Being and Time* by France's interbellum philosophical culture.

However, the most notably original feature of the 1933 letter-essay is certainly not the simple parallel between Bach and Heidegger, which though innovative can hardly be said to topple the traditional interpretive framework, but its suggestion that *Being and Time* be seen as an "immense *Art of Fugue*". A musician and musicologist by training, Rachel came to philosophical studies relatively late in her young life, under the guidance of such authors as Lev Šestov and Wahl<sup>21</sup>.

Rachel perceives what we might call a true isomorphism between the philosophical text and the musical composition. Following the train of thought that her proposal suggests, we come across points of contact that can be surprising, and even more pregnant with possibilities. Both works are incomplete, Bach's because of the composer's illness and death; Heidegger's as a result of the *Kehre*, the turn that shifted the philosopher's entire focus and outlook. Both are constructed in architectural form, their compositional criteria defined on a numerical basis; in each, an implicit subtext runs through the whole, couched to varying degrees in the mysteries.

But the point of closest contact between the musical and philosophical texts is a theme that in *Being and Time* is programmatically announced in several passages, but will be more fully developed in the writings that followed the *Kehre*, viz., the relationship between the fundamental dimensions of thought, of affectivity and of discourse.

### 3.

What we indicate *ontologically* by the term "state-of-mind" is *ontically* the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned. Prior to all psychology of moods, a field which in any case still lies fallow, it

<sup>21</sup> In 1925, at the age of thirty. Rachel Bespaloff decided unexpectedly to abandon her promising musical career and devote herself wholeheartedly to the "philosophical awakening" which she tells us was sparked by her encounter with the existentialist thought of the Ukrainian philosopher Lev Šestov (see R. Bespaloff, *Lettres à Jean Wahl 1937-1947. Sur le fond le plus déchiqueté de l'Historie*, ed. M. Jutrin, Editions Claire Paulhan, Paris 2003, p. 52 ff). From that moment, she became the interlocutor and confidante of a number of liberal-minded thinkers, including Daniel Halévy (an associate of Charles Péguy), Gabriel Marcel, Jacques Schiffrin, and in particular Jean Wahl.

is necessary to see this phenomenon as a fundamental *esistenziale*, and to outline its structure.<sup>22</sup>

This “state-of-mind”, which had been fleshed out to some extent in Heidegger’s 1924 lectures on the *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie* (where the notion of *Befindlichkeit* is linked to the concept of *pathos*, as described in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*<sup>23</sup>), is the primary object of Section 29 of *Being and Time*, but then crops up continually in the post-*Kehre* writings.

We frequently come across the conviction that intellectual work and scientific research, if it is to accomplish anything worthwhile, must be free of emotional overtones. From this perspective, philosophy’s basic assumption must thus be that rationality will vanquish the sphere of feeling, and that the *lógos*, the word-reason, is superior to moods and states of mind. The question of the *Stimmungen*, as it emerges from *Being and Time*, is a theoretical crux, coinciding with whether philosophical inquiry can ever be utterly removed from all forms of “affectivity”. In other words, the problem concerns the relationship between *Verstehen* and the domain of *Befindlichkeit*<sup>24</sup>.

*Befindlichkeit*, a term Heidegger coined from the German verb *sich befinden*, “finding oneself or being located in a certain state of mind”, is

the ontological quintessence of that dimension of human existence which in traditional anthropology is covered by the doctrine of affects, except that for Heidegger, being in a given mood, finding oneself located in it, and thus the “inferior” elements of sensibility such as affects and passions – of which *Befindlichkeit* is, in the structure of Being-there, the ontological condition of possibility – are what constitutes existence.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by John Macquarrie and E. Robinson (1962), Blackwell, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, pp. 172-173. The German term used by Heidegger to indicate the “state-of-mind” is *Befindlichkeit*.

<sup>23</sup> “Astonishment, as *pathos*, is the *archè* (the beginning) of philosophy [...]. The *pathos* of astonishment thus does not simply stand at the beginning of philosophy, as, for example, the washing of his hands precedes the surgeon’s operation. Astonishment carries and pervades philosophy” (see M. Heidegger, *What is philosophy?*, tr. by J.T. Wilde and W. Kluback, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland 1956, p. 81).

<sup>24</sup> See U. Curi, *Passione*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2013, p. 211.

<sup>25</sup> F. Volpi, *Glossario in Guida a Heidegger*, cit., p. 584. In the Italian edition of *Being and Time*, the term “*Befindlichkeit*” is translated as “situazione emotiva”, or as “sentirsi situato” or “situatività”: this, as Volpi notes “indicates, in ontologized form, the set of elements of passivity, opacity and conditionality that characterize Dasein’s way-of-being. It thus expresses the “located” character of life, its passive and receptive moment, whereas the complementary term, *Verstehen*, indicates the moments of activity, spontaneity, projecting and transparency of being [...]. Dasein is always in a certain “state-of-mind” or “mood” (*Stimmung*), in which it finds itself (*sich befindet*)” (*ibidem*). “It is no accident

As we mentioned earlier, Heidegger first acknowledged the close connection between state-of-mind and thought in the lecture course on the *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* he gave in the summer semester of 1924. In these lectures, he reflected on the ties between the affective component of existence and the moment of understanding, where the Aristotelean notion of *páthos* (which debouches into the then-nascent concept of “state-of-mind” [*Befindlichkeit*]) is described as the wellspring of existence, playing a role that is decisive for understanding [*Verstehen*]<sup>26</sup>.

Heidegger brings the close ties between thought and state-of-mind into sharper focus in *Being and Time*, where the affective component is put in the forefront of the existential dynamic<sup>27</sup>. State-of-mind is seen as a structural moment of existence, bearing witness to man’s affective relationship with himself and the surrounding world. Together with understanding, state-of-mind is thus a fundamental mode of Dasein and its disclosure, its opening up to the world. It follows that there can be no understanding (*Verstehen*) and projecting upon possibilities without mood, since understanding and knowledge itself are sparked by a passion, which establishes how the subsequent projection takes place.

The concept of *Befindlichkeit* in *Being and Time* appears to be two-fold. Through this notion, Heidegger undoubtedly alludes on the one hand to an ontical constant of Dasein, viz., its always finding itself attuned to a certain state-of-mind (*Stimmung*) that conditions each active projection of Dasein at the outset. On the other hand, Heidegger seems to venture beyond this

that, in dealing with it in Sections 29-30 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger refers to the Aristotelean doctrine of the *pathe*. [...] As regards the meaning of the term, in addition to the indicated sections of *Being and Time*, we must bear in mind a passage of the *Zollikon Seminars* in which Heidegger specifies that we must distinguish between “the condition [*Befinden*] which we allude to when we ask someone, ‘How are you?’ – that is, ‘How is it going with you?’ [...] and] what is interpreted as ontological disposition [*Befindlichkeit*]” (F. Volpi, *Glossario in Guida a Heidegger*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2005, pp. 309-310).

On the concept of state-of-mind in *Being and Time* see: F.-W. von Herrmann, *Befindlichkeit und Verstehen in ihrer Stellung zur Seinsfrage*, in Id., *Subjekt und Dasein. Interpretationen zu „Sein und Zeit“*, Frankfurt a.M. 1974, pp. 66-75; R. Pocaí, *Heideggers Theorie der Befindlichkeit. Sein Denken zwischen 1927 und 1933*, Alber, Freiburg-München 1996; T.S. Kalariparambil, *Das befindliche Verstehen und die Seinsfrage*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 1999; A. Rodríguez, *Wahrheit und Befindlichkeit in der Fundamentalontologie*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2003.

<sup>26</sup> See U. Curi, *Passione*, cit., pp. 212-213. For the text of the lectures delivered in 1924, see: M. Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, ed. M. Michalski, 2002 (vol. 18 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, 102 volumes, 1975, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main); translated by R.D. Metcalf and M.B. Tanzer as *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2009. For the critical studies of Heidegger’s 1924 course, see in particular D.M. Gross and A. Kemmann (eds.), *Heidegger and Rhetoric*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2005.

<sup>27</sup> See in particular Sections 29, 30 in M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, cit., pp. 172-182.



ontical view, and see *Befindlichkeit* as a trascendental structure that makes it possible to deal concretely with each instance of that which is and the state-of-mind. From this consummately ontological perspective, *Befindlichkeit* is man's first key to the sphere of being and entity and thus, more generally, to the phenomenal world. If something in general is originally open to man and can be disclosed to his understanding, this is possible by virtue of the state-of-mind and its disclosive character: its *Erschließungscharakter*<sup>28</sup>.

From the very beginning of his treatise, Heidegger firmly denies that referring to *Befindlichkeit* as “one of the existential structures in which the Being of the ‘there’ maintains itself”<sup>29</sup>, is a surrender to irrationalism. This is because “when irrationalism, as the counterplay of rationalism, talks about the things to which rationalism is blind, it does so only with a squint”<sup>30</sup>. The fact that Being-there can also become master of its moods must not in fact mislead us into ontologically denying that mood is a primordial kind of being. Rather, we can say that it provides that primordial disclosure without which the “there” of Being-there could not even exist. Hence the recognition of a fundamental point: bare mood “discloses the ‘there’ more primordially, but correspondingly it *closes* it *off* more stubbornly than any *not-perceiving*”<sup>31</sup>.

It is important to emphasize that in this section and the following Section 30 on fear as a state-of-mind, Heidegger is insistent that “*facticity is not the factuality of the factum brutum of something present-at-hand, but a characteristic of Dasein’s Being – one which has been taken up in existence, even if proximally it has been thrust aside*”<sup>32</sup>. It follows that the first ontologically essential characteristic of the state-of-mind is that it discloses Dasein in its thrownness, and in the manner of an evasive turning-away<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> This second view of *Befindlichkeit*, which Heidegger outlines in several passages of *Being and Time*, has been illuminated by C. Pasqualin in Il fondamento “patico” dell’ermeneutico, Affettività, pensiero e linguaggio nell’opera di Heidegger, Inschibboleth, Rome 2015 (see especially pp. 179-427).

Also see J.-A. Escudero, *Heideggers Phänomenologie der Stimmungen. Zur welterschließenden Funktion der Angst, der Langweile und der Verhaltenheit*, in “Heidegger Studies”, XXVI, 2010 pp. 83-96;

S. Mulhall, *Can There be an Epistemology of Moods?*, in H. Dreyfus-M. Wrathall (ed.), *Heidegger Reexamined*, 4 vol., Routledge, New York, vol. IV, 2002, pp. 33-52;

G. Stenstad, *Attuning and Transformation*, in “Heidegger Studies”, VII, 1991, pp. 75-88;

H.-H. Gander, *Grund-und Leitstimmungen in Heideggers, “Beiträge zur Philosophie”*, in “Heidegger Studies”, X, 1994, pp. 15-31;

F.-W. von Herrmann, *Dasein – Stimmung – Befindlichkeit*, in “Daseinsanalyse”, XXII, 2006, pp. 4-14.

<sup>29</sup> Ivi, p. 182.

<sup>30</sup> Ivi, p. 175.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> Ivi, p. 174; emphasis in the original.

<sup>33</sup> See ivi, p. 175.

This brings us to a critical point in Heidegger's analysis of *Befindlichkeit*. From what has been said so far, in fact, *Befindlichkeit* is clearly quite different from apprehending a mere psychical condition.

The example that Heidegger gives here is that of depression, or "bad moods"<sup>34</sup>, where we can see the second essential characteristic of the state-of-mind, in that "the world, Dasein-with, and existence are *equiprimordially disclosed*; and state-of-mind is a basic existential species of this disclosure"<sup>35</sup>. The argument then continues, bringing us to the third essential characteristic of states-of-mind, which contributes most to an understanding of the "worldhood of the world". This is the prior disclosedness of the world, which belongs to Being-in and is partly constituted by one's state-of-mind. If we want to frame the meaning of *Befindlichkeit* more clearly, Heidegger explains, the best reference is Aristotle's discussion of the *pathe* in the second book of his *Rhetoric*, "the earliest systematic Interpretation of affects that has come down to us"<sup>36</sup>. In the sections we have quoted from *Being and Time*, as well as in other writings from the same period<sup>37</sup>, *Befindlichkeit* is thus considered – along with *Verstehen* (understanding) and *Rede* (discourse) – as one of the three essential existential characteristics, equiprimordially disclosed with and constituting Being-there, as the ontological quintessence of the traditional theory of affects. In fact, a state-of-mind is a basic existential way in which we can say that Being-there coincides with its "there". Consequently, it "not only characterizes Dasein ontologically, but, because of what it discloses, it is at the same time methodologically significant in principle for the existential analytic"<sup>38</sup>.

Some ten years later, all of this is confirmed in Heidegger's major work of 1938, where the relationship between the basic mood and thought is outlined with great clarity. All essential thinking, in fact, demands that its propositions bear the mark of the basic mood, because if the latter is

<sup>34</sup> "In these, Dasein becomes blind to itself, the environment with which it is concerned veils itself, the circumspection of concern gets led astray...A mood assails us. It comes neither from 'outside, but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being" (ivi, pp. 175-176).

<sup>35</sup> Ivi, p. 176. Because – as Heidegger immediately explains – "this disclosedness itself is essentially Being-in-the-world" (*ibidem*).

<sup>36</sup> Ivi, pp. 178.

<sup>37</sup> In the inaugural lecture given at the University of Freiburg on July 24, 1929, for instance, he notes: "Such being attuned, in which we 'are' one way or another and which determines us through and through, lets us find ourselves among beings as a whole. The founding mode of attunement [*die Befindlichkeit der Stimmung*] not only reveals beings as a whole in various ways, but this revealing – far from being merely incidental – is also the basic occurrence of our Da-sein". (M. Heidegger, *What is Metaphysics?* (1929), tr. D.F. Krell, in *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, ed. D.F. Krell, HarperSanFrancisco 1993, p. 100).

<sup>38</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, cit., pp. 178-179.

lacking, “then everything is a forced clatter of concepts and of the mere shells of words”<sup>39</sup>. The state-of-mind can be considered as the diffusion of Being’s trembling as event in Dasein, where this diffusion is “not mere vanishment and expiration, but just the opposite – preservation of the spark in the sense of the clearing of the ‘there’ according to the full fissure of being”<sup>40</sup>.

In the second half of the Thirties, then, the notion of mood as the *sine qua non* of philosophical thought takes firmer form. In the *Beiträge*, the affective moment is the foundation of thought, precisely because the state-of-mind which man experiences in the self-showing of Being is the prime source from which philosophy draws its intuitions<sup>41</sup>. The state-of-mind is thus seen as the propulsive force that drives and nourishes all genuine meditation. Without the affective element, man would be unable to think.

Against the supremacy of cold rationality – a means of emotionless calculation – Heidegger offers a thinking rooted in affectivity, without being irrational or lacking in rigor: states-of-mind can provide access to dimensions that are otherwise unreachable, pathways to discovery, since it is precisely the *Stimmungen* that make philosophical discourse what it is<sup>42</sup>.

#### 4.

As mentioned above, the most original aspect of Rachel Bespaloff’s interpretation of *Being and Time* is the idea that the text is a sort of “immense *Art of Fugue*”, that builds and gathers momentum around the theme of being which – albeit in different forms – is present in Bach’s great work. It should be emphasized that this parallel is not acciden-

<sup>39</sup> M. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, tr. by R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2012, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> *Ivi*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> See U. Curi, *Passione*, cit., p. 216. For a more extensive discussion of this issue, see in particular C. Pasqualin, *Il fondamento “patico” dell’ermeneutico, Affettività, pensiero e linguaggio nell’opera di Heidegger*, cit.. Also see A. Ardovino, *Heidegger. Esistenza ed effettività. Dall’ermeneutica dell’effettività all’analitica esistenziale (1919-1927)*, Guerini, Milano 1998. Another major text is P.L. Coriando, *Affektenlehre und Phänomenologie der Stimmungen: Wege einer Ontologie und Ethik des Emotionalen*, Klostermann, Frankfurt a.M. 2002. On the relationship between thinking and *Stimmung* in Heidegger’s work, see in particular: M. Haar, *Stimmung et pensée*, in F. Volpi et al., *Heidegger et l’idée de la phénoménologie*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1988, pp. 265-283; and B.-C. Han, *Heideggers Herz. Zum Begriff der Stimmung bei Martin Heidegger*, Fink, München 1996.

<sup>42</sup> “And only on the basis of the attunement (*disposition*) does the language of correspondence obtain its precision, its tuning” (M. Heidegger, *What is philosophy?*, cit., p. 75. Also see M. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, tr. by W. McNeill and N. Walker, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2001, pp. 301-304.

tal, or a mere analogy. Unquestionably, Besseloff's belief in music as an intrinsically "philosophical" approach to the pursuit of truth clearly reflects elements of her intellectual biography, viz., her training as a concert pianist and musicologist. On the other hand, throughout the history of philosophy, an acknowledged nexus has linked the "love of knowledge" and the art of sounds<sup>43</sup>.

Rachel maintains that music can create

a finished presence, where everything that has been still vibrates and resonates, where everything that is about to be lets its arrival be sensed: it is the perfect instant. [...] This authentic presence, tied to the past and to the future, is what Heidegger calls *Augenblick*. It is here that music reaches the unity of the three ecstasies: "the ecstatic unity".<sup>44</sup>

According to Rachel, music and the cadences of thinking and the passions share a sameness of structure: "in every metaphysician of a certain kind – poet, philosopher, or novelist – there is a composer who strives to snatch music's power to take chaos and abstract a freedom and a law from it"<sup>45</sup>. Music, for its part, "is a knowledge of being which is not expressed in vague and nebulous terms, but in a rigorously constructed language of sound from which it cannot be separated"<sup>46</sup>.

As in Bach's score, *Being and Time* can also be said to present a dominant theme – the *subject* – that is used to generate other themes, in other registers and keys, inverting the melodic intervals or systematically reversing the order of the notes. In its complex conceptual outline, then, *Sein und Zeit* follows the pattern of the musical work, replicating much of its problematic nature and persistent enigmas.

Rachel's letter-essay on Heidegger does not follow through on these insights analytically. Nevertheless, it can be argued that she believes the theme the two works, philosophical and musical, have inherently in common is that of *Erschlossenheit*, seen as the ontological structure of Being-in-the-world<sup>47</sup>. This has a decisive consequence for the nexus whereby music and philosophy are indissolubly linked. Indeed,

<sup>43</sup> On the relationship between philosophy and music, see in particular the work of: M. Donà, *Filosofia della musica*, Bompiani, Milano 2006; F. Nicolaci, *Esserci e musica. Heidegger e l'ermeneutica musicale*, Intr. by M. Donà, Il Prato, Padova 2012; F. Capitoni, *La verità che si sente. La musica come strumento di conoscenza*, Asterios, Trieste 2013.

<sup>44</sup> R. Besseloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit., p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> R. Besseloff, *Avant-Propos*, in *Cheminevements et Carrefours*, J. Vrin, Paris 2004, pp. 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> R. Besseloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit., p. 26.

<sup>47</sup> *Erschlossenheit* is the constitutive character whereby Dasein is disclosed to the world and to itself. "This means that Dasein is intrinsically a disclosing itself to the world, and thus a Being-in-the-world (*In-der Welt-sein*)" (F. Volpi, *Glossario* in M. Heidegger, *Essere e tempo*, cit., p. 590). See also R. Sembera, *A Glossary of Technical Terms*, in *Rephrasing*

until now, a contrast has always been drawn between music's affective content and its spiritual content, between its power to awaken our senses and its ability to exercise our understanding, to unsettle our spirit. Heidegger's philosophy reconciles these standpoints. If music is indeed a peak of *Erschlossenheit* (or at least, that is how it seems to me), it is because it is there that the two modes of disclosure (understanding and affectivity) that are so closely conjoined strengthen each other and are fully manifested.<sup>48</sup>

This is not only a question of bringing music and philosophy "closer together", merely in terms of an analogy. Rather, what emerges here is the "musical" nature of philosophy, given that the dimensions of affectivity and spirituality – usually considered to be contrasting – converge in it. We can go so far as to say that, by establishing a close connection between Heidegger and Bach, Rachel not only points to a fundamental aspect of the overall design of *Sein und Zeit*, but even prefigures the route that Heidegger was to take after the book was published, specifically in his writings of the Thirties that culminated in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*<sup>49</sup>.

In fact, the planned – but never written – third division of *Being and Time* was to have *reversed the order of the terms in the title*, because "now it was being's turn to be configured according to time"<sup>50</sup>, in an exact echo of the structure of the *Art of Fugue*. And here, a key detail will help us appreciate how prescient Bepaloff proved to be. When she proposed that Heidegger's text be interpreted in the light of Bach's unfinished composition, the philosopher had not yet stated his plans for the third division, which was then withdrawn. In other words, Rachel alludes to a systematic reversal of the themes, after the pattern of the *Art of Fugue*, in 1932, *before* Heidegger described the suppressed section in terms of a reversal. Bepaloff recognizes the "Bachian" design underlying *Sein und Zeit* even though she is still unaware of the reasons that Heidegger would express only in 1947, when he published the *Letter on Humanism*<sup>51</sup>.

*Heidegger: A Companion to 'Being and Time'*, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2007. p. 238: *Erschlossenheit*, or disclosedness, is "the appearing (manifestation) of structures of Dasein as a result of Dasein's comportments; the emergence or accessibility of existential structures in the act of existing".

<sup>48</sup> R. Bepaloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit., pp. 24-25.

<sup>49</sup> Originally written in 1936-1938; see the translation by R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, cit.

<sup>50</sup> See A. Marini, *Introduzione. L' "impulso incessante" e le sue metamorfosi* in M. Heidegger, *Essere e tempo*, Italian edition with parallel German text, ed. A. Marini, Mondadori, Milano 2006, p. XIV.

<sup>51</sup> "in the publication of *Being and Time* the third division of the first part, 'Being and Time', was held back [...]. Here *everything is reversed*" (M. Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, tr. by F.A. Capuzzi and J.G. Gray, in D.F. Krell (ed.) *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, revised and expanded edition, Routledge, London, 1993, pp. 231).

Though he did not say so explicitly, it is not unlikely that Heidegger “did indeed have Bach’s *Kunst der Fuge* in mind when, in the second half of the Thirties, he bade farewell to all philosophical systems and set out towards the new rigor of the idea of being as event”<sup>52</sup>. In the “second half of the Thirties”, then, at the time the *Beiträge* were written. But, as we have seen, Rachel perceived the connection between Bach and Heidegger at the end of 1932, anticipating the direction that Heidegger’s thought was to take. Between 1936 and 1938, once the “Turn” was complete, the term *Fuge* (fugue) comes to occupy a central role in the text that sums up the path taken after the publication of *Sein und Zeit*. As Heidegger himself wrote, “the projection intends what can be willed only in the attempt at an inceptual thinking [...]: to be a *conjuncture* [*Fuge*] of this thinking”<sup>53</sup>. It should also be noted that the term Heidegger repeatedly uses to refer to his change of mind after completing *Being and Time*, viz., *Kehre*, does not indicate simply a “turn”, as it is usually translated, but alludes to a reversal, a switchback in the road, and thus to a “movement” similar to those we find in Bach’s composition<sup>54</sup>.

The overall design that clarifies the “essential title” of the entire work, viz., *Of the Event (Von Ereignis)*, runs through several forms and declensions of the *Fuge*, including the rigor of the structure (*Gefüge*), the availability (*Gefügung*) of a single way or path, and the dispensation (*Fügung*) of Being:

a conjuncture [*Fuge*] in this threefold sense must be attempted and thereby also something more essential and more successful (which is bestowed on the future ones), something from which a leap can be taken, a leap that is provisionally appended and inserted in order to be overcome.<sup>55</sup>

As for the relationship between this point of arrival and *Sein und Zeit*, and thus the route that led to the *Ereignis*, it must be said that

there is no gradual “development” here. Even less is there *that* relation of the later to the earlier according to which the later would already lie enclosed in the earlier. Since everything in the thinking of being is directed toward the unique, *to fall down* [in the original, *Umstürze*, pl. of *Umstürzen*, overturn] *is, as it were, the norm here!*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See the fascinating book by S. Gorgone, *Il tempo che viene. Martin Heidegger dal kairos all'Ereignis*, Guida, Napoli 2005, pp. 148-149; emphasis added.

<sup>53</sup> M. Heidegger, *Contributions*, cit., p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> On the polysemous use of the term *Kehre* in Heidegger, confirming that it cannot be reduced to a generic “turn”, see the illuminating comments by F. Volpi, *Avvertenza del curatore dell'edizione italiana* in M. Heidegger, *Contributi alla filosofia (Dall'evento)*, Italian translation by A. Iadicicco and F. Volpi, ed. F. Volpi, Adelphi, Milano 2007, cit., pp. 23-24.

<sup>55</sup> M. Heidegger, *Contributions*, cit., p. 65.

<sup>56</sup> Ivi, p. 67; emphasis added.

This brings us to an assertion that might seem rash, but which we believe has been justified by the foregoing arguments, viz., that the *Beiträge* must be considered the unfinished part of *Sein und Zeit*, in the sense that here Heidegger fills out the picture that had been sketched in the 1927 work<sup>57</sup> – viewing thinking about being essentially as the “art of fugue”. Fugue becomes “the particular characteristic of thinking about being against the system as a distinctive form of modern metaphysical thought”<sup>58</sup>. Both are a way of organizing thought, but “the conjuncture is something essentially other than a ‘system’”<sup>59</sup>. This is because the conjuncture, the *Fuge*, is “the disposal which is compliant [*sich fügend*] to the call and which thereby grounds Da-sein”<sup>60</sup>. *Harmonic discord* in music likewise bears witness to a transcendence which is both necessary and unattainable. Music, for Rachel Bepaloff, is thus the fullest expression of the challenges entailed in the pursuit of a truth that recedes like the horizon, and that no *religio* can help us reach.

## 5.

“It is not only through understanding [*Verstehen*] that Being is accessible to us, but also through *Befindlichkeit*”<sup>61</sup>. With these words, Rachel concludes the initial portion of her letter, stating the central problem: the link between the two ontological dimensions identified by Heidegger. In doing so, her originality and penetration in approaching *Sein und Zeit* are immediately apparent. As she introduces the topic, Bepaloff starts by remarking on the difficulties of translating German term *Befindlichkeit* (into French, in her case, but the same is true of other languages).

Help me<sup>62</sup> – please – to translate this word. If we could stay in the realm of *Vorhanden*, we could translate *Verstehen* with intelligence, *Befindlichkeit* with sensitivity. But these terms do not convey the rhythm of lifetime, intelligence’s leaping ahead, its burst into the possible, nor the oscillations or the effervescence of the *Stimmungen*.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>57</sup> As F. Volpi clearly states: the *Beiträge* are “the most complete and consistent attempt – after the ‘failure’ of *Being and Time* and after the political intermezzo of 1933 – to return to the issue that was to have been addressed in the unpublished division of the 1927 masterwork” (*Avvertenza*, cit., p. 19).

<sup>58</sup> S. Gorgone, *Il tempo che viene. Martin Heidegger dal kairos all’Ereignis*, cit., p. 149.

<sup>59</sup> M. Heidegger, *Contributions*, cit., p. 65.

<sup>60</sup> Ivi, p. 66.

<sup>61</sup> R. Bepaloff, *Su Heidegger* cit., p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> The plea is addressed to the letter’s recipient, Daniel Halévy.

<sup>63</sup> R. Bepaloff, *Su Heidegger*, p. 23.

This is because, even though *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit* are distinct, they are also coessentially interwoven with each other, on the one hand because “intelligence is sensitive”, and on the other because sensitivity “is intelligent”<sup>64</sup>.

Going back to focus more closely on the concept of “mood”, or of “finding oneself”, Rachel stresses that *Befindlichkeit* is nothing other than the expression, at times clear, often indecipherable, of Thrownness of Being, as Heidegger states when he emphasizes that states-of-mind “disclose *Dasein* in its thrownness, and – proximally and for the most part – in the manner of an evasive turning-away”<sup>65</sup>. It should be noted that, from this perspective, what *Befindlichkeit* is expressed in – our tendencies and dispositions, our spirits, our fickle inconstancies and changes of heart – goes infinitely beyond the horizon of pure subjectivity. It follows that “understanding and sensitivity, indissolubly united, are the disclosure of Being-in-the-world”<sup>66</sup>.

In her letter-essay, Besseloff’s interpretation of *Being and Time* is thus plotted chiefly along two coordinates: the musical “reading” of the work, seen as a grand “Art of Fugue”, and the strong stress on the notion of *Befindlichkeit*, taken as the essential feature of *Dasein* as thrownness. But the theoretical and hermeneutic apex of this approach to Heidegger’s work is the link it forges between these two aspects, i.e., its identification of “mood” as the foundation of music. This emerges from the fact that it is precisely in music that the two modes of disclosure – *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit* – fortify each other in their fullest manifestation.

That these two aspects are complementary, and have a common foundation in music, had already been proclaimed in *Sein und Zeit*, when Heidegger states that whereas understanding uses the affective life in the manner of “turning thither”, affectivity refers to it in the manner of “turning away”<sup>67</sup>. But Rachel makes this nexus clearer, maintaining that intelligence and sensitivity do not draw on sharply distinct or opposing ways of proceeding, but on an interweaving whereby the distinctive character of Being-in-the-world is revealed. In this complex conceptual framework, music’s role is essential. If

*Befindlichkeit* is in itself both a turning towards Being and towards Being-in-the-world and a turning away, a refusal to acknowledge Being in its Thrownness, it is clear that music – depending on whether it asks our sensitivity to inform us about Being or to take us away from it – is an art that reveals, or a noise that stupefies.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*. Heidegger himself refers explicitly to this interweaving: “Understanding always has its mood” (*Being and Time*, cit., p. 182); “mood discloses” (ivi, p. 174).

<sup>65</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, cit., p. 175.

<sup>66</sup> R. Besseloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit., p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, cit., p. 390, section 68b.

<sup>68</sup> R. Besseloff, *Su Heidegger*, cit., p. 25.



### **Heidegger attuned to Bach. Pensiero e affettività in *Essere e tempo***

“*Essere e tempo* può essere considerato come un’immensa *Arte della fuga*”. In questi termini Rachel Bepaloff formula un giudizio che esplicitamente pone in relazione il testo heideggeriano pubblicato nel 1927, con l’opera incompiuta del grande musicista tedesco. La Bepaloff inquadra dunque l’interpretazione di *Essere e tempo* principalmente mediante due coordinate di riferimento: la “lettura” musicale dell’opera, intesa come una grande “Arte della fuga”, e la forte enfasi sulla nozione di *Befindlichkeit*, assunta come connotato essenziale dell’Esserci come essere-gettato. Ma il vertice teorico ed ermeneutico più rilevante di questo approccio all’opera di Heidegger è costituito dalla saldatura fra questi due aspetti, vale a dire dall’individuazione della “tonalità emotiva” come fondamento della musica. Come emerge dal fatto che proprio nella musica le due modalità dello svelamento – il *Verstehen* e la *Befindlichkeit* – si corroborano reciprocamente e dunque conseguono la loro più compiuta manifestazione.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Situazione-emotiva, “Arte della fuga”, *Essere e tempo*, Bach, Heidegger

### **Heidegger attuned to Bach. Thought and affectivity in *Being and Time***

“*Being and Time* can be considered as an immense *Art of Fugue*”. In these words Rachel Bepaloff formulates an opinion that explicitly links the work Heidegger published in 1927 with the great German composer’s unfinished masterpiece. Bepaloff’s interpretation of *Being and Time* is thus plotted chiefly along two coordinates: the musical “reading” of the work, seen as a grand “Art of Fugue”, and the strong stress on the notion of *Befindlichkeit*, taken as the essential feature of Dasein as thrownness. But the theoretical and hermeneutic apex of this approach to Heidegger’s work is the link it forges between these two aspects, i.e., its identification of “mood” as the foundation of music. This emerges from the fact that it is precisely in music that the two modes of disclosure – *Verstehen* and *Befindlichkeit* – fortify each other in their fullest manifestation.

KEYWORDS: *Befindlichkeit*, “Art of Fugue”, *Being and Time*, Bach, Heidegger