

# I DIRITTI DEL NUOVO SPIRITO METAFORICO: GASTON BACHELARD TRA MATEMATICA E LETTERATURA

CARLO CACCIA

**ABSTRACT** · *The Rights of the New Metaphorical Spirit: Gaston Bachelard between Mathematics and Literature* · Gaston Bachelard's philosophical work is well studied by epistemologists and aesthetics scholars. However, Bachelard's role in the history of literary theory is problematic. Apart from the consideration received by the *nouvelle critique*, the work of the Bar-sur-Aube philosopher has been little studied by literary theorists who have underestimated a literary criticism characterised by continuous overlaps with the philosophy of mathematics. One way to enhance Bachelard's thought in literary criticism could be to analyse his theory of metaphor both in his epistemological and poetological work. In the context of his critique of humanistic culture, Bachelard equates metaphors with «epistemological obstacles» that could stop scientific progress. With the same provocative attitude and from the point of view of his philosophy of imagination, Bachelard considers metaphor an intellectualistic phenomenon that risks undermining an active reception of literary images. Nevertheless, the French philosopher attempts to construct a new concept of metaphor in the epistemological and poetological spheres. In this essay we will try to examine the role of metaphor in Bachelard's thought, referring also to the important contributions of the epistemologists and Bachelard's scholars Charles Alunni and Vincent Bontems. In the first part of the paper, we analyse Bachelard's critique of the use of metaphors which keep scientists away from the activity of rational abstraction. Nevertheless, we highlight Bachelard's revitalisation of the concept of metaphor, both by reducing it to its 'illustrative value' and by assimilating it to the acts of consciousness of the *esprit mathématique*. The second part of our essay will highlight the polemic against the theoretical visions of literary criticism that reduce metaphor to a sign and the need to 'live' metaphors in their ontogenetic immediacy by following their imaginative dynamism. In the third part of the paper, we will verify the continuities between Bachelard's epistemological and poetological thought, showing how simple mathematical concepts are applied within the study of metaphors in literature in order to construct an 'objective literary criticism'.

**KEYWORDS** · Gaston Bachelard, Theory of Literature, Metaphor, Epistemology, Realism, Phenomenology, Deconstruction, *Rêverie*, Lautréamont.

## INTRODUZIONE

L'IMPORTANZA del pensiero estetico di Gaston Bachelard è sottovalutata dalla teoria della letteratura contemporanea. All'infuori della considerazione ricevuta nella Francia del dopoguerra (in cui era un punto di riferimento imprescindibile per gli esponenti della *nouvelle critique*), l'opera bachelardiana negli anni è stata assimilata poco accuratamente alla critica tematica o alla psicocritica, con motivazioni coerenti nell'ottica di una sistematizzazione storica della teoria lette-

carlo.caccia@uniupo.it, Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italia.

[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.19272/202201902003](https://doi.org/10.19272/202201902003) · «MODERNA» · XXIV · 1-2 · 2022

[HTTP://MODERNA.LIBRAWEB.NET](http://moderna.libraweb.net)

RECEIVED: 22.4.2022 · REVISED: 1.5.2022 · ACCEPTED: 5.5.2022