

## The place of education in the work of Gaston Bachelard

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### Introduction

I chose starting this text from the interview, at the inauguration of Bachelard Brasil Channel, answering the question of the creator of the channel, Gabriel Kafure da Rocha: Why Bachelard and what place does education occupy in his work? What does it mean to affirm Bachelard is an educator? I try to answer these questions in the affirmative, albeit in a simple way, in an allusion to his work, *The Philosophy of No - why not Bachelard?* And why not Bachelard as an educator?

It is always a movement of strengthening and discovering new learning by reading, talking and exchanging ideas about Bachelard. Therefore, we will highlight, in the philosophy apparatus, our first task; the second task is going to insert him into the education apparatus. His Philosophy offers material for resistance and represents the freshness that the academy, in a way, has lost and does not know how to recover. Bachelard was a critical thinker, with fine, subtle and sometimes disconcerting ironies. His thinking is liberating and I would even dare to say, libertarian, making it understand that, in the process of human formation, both self-knowledge and knowledge are relevant for living in a contradictory society that it does not always work to reconcile knowledge. For this reason, as an educator of science and philosophy, he talked about other areas of human knowledge, in a world where we lose, every day, the ability to make us “hope”, in the sense of Paulo Freire (1997).

Bachelard is a master of knowledge and flavors, of sensitivities and wisdom beyond the world of academia. A world often cast on labels, subjective and group preferences, living from the time of the tribes (MAFFESOLI, 1998), not only of young people, but, in an allusion, to always closed academic tribes, restricted to those who are part of them. The thought – still on Bachelard - that exposes feelings, looks, smells, tastes, auditions, and tact reminds us that it is possible to

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dream while you are awake, as the children in their daydreams or as the adults in their dream moments. Thought that alerts us to the fact that it is fundamental to dream before thinking, that is why it makes us think of the verbs seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, thinking, and feeling the thought as part of the philosophy of the human beings in contact with nature, in contact with their nature, often asleep, ignored, relegated to the background.

Bachelard attests that the cogito of a dreamer is populated with images, mirages, daydreams and dreams, of known and unknown, created and discovered worlds; that it is possible to wake up to feel the taste of things, to see the colors of the world, because, in a hurried life, we no longer pay due attention to things, as we no longer pay attention to ourselves, our feelings and other people.

Bachelard, because fundamentally, the distraction, in a capitalist society like ours, has become synonymous with tiredness, of melancholy. Bachelard, because we lack the sea with its colors, smells and waves, to love the world, to love destiny, as in Nietzsche (2001); we lack of the Heráclito river, the river of life and death, hunger and satiety, and the Bachelard river, in which to observe the scenes of the Martin-fisherman bird, in the Bar-Sur-Aube river (city where he was born) , it was something unforgettable; we lack land to step on, landscapes and stops to stop our eyes from the living; there is no refuge for the tired and troubled spirit in a world in which nature is no longer thought, felt or exalted, nature in us has faded, it has become disenchanted of the human beings.

Why Bachelard? Because Bachelard is very updated, and each reading of his work is a reading of inhabited and dreamed worlds. Bachelard, because he awakens us from dogmatic, ideological sleep and puts his reader on the path of life's poetic feelings to see the world with eyes of hope, nature as the welcoming mother and the cosmos as the final destination.

### **Bachelard as and educator**

Pierre Quillet (1977, p.19) points out that “we must remember that a Bachelard course or conference is essentially a Bachelard festival”. The meeting we had about Bachelard's thinking, in creating the Bachelard Brasil Channel, was undoubtedly a “Bachelard festival”, with light smiles, thought-provoking notes, sharing, experiences, teaching moments and enough heat to

warm up the sad life in amid the coronavirus pandemic that plagues the world and causes fear, tiredness, and human isolation more than social isolation.

Bachelard's concern with education, starting with the formation of the human being, highlights the pedagogical character in his work, to the point of Léon Brunschvicg asking him why he was concerned about teaching science and poetry, and he answer him in the work *The Applied Rationalism* (1977), that he was probably more a teacher than a philosopher. We can discuss the meaning of this answer, which is neither simple nor complex, it is, rather, a revealing answer from a powerful educator who is pleased with the exchange that can generate many learnings, attesting to the willingness for dialogue in the field of human and exact sciences.

His proposal and proving a Pedagogy of horizontality point to the need for a pedagogy capable of giving back to human reason its function of turbulence and aggressiveness, making it possible, therefore, to learn and conquer autonomy in the formative process, removing passivity, indifference, the blindness and ignorance of educators and students (JAPIASSU, 1993; SILVA, 2018).

Regarding Bachelard's teaching, Quillet (1977) highlights that it cannot be considered vulgarization, something insignificant, nor pedagogy in the strict sense of the term, since he does not seek to train or inform his readers and students, but that his teaching is something that is not allowed to be confiscated by vulgarization, liquid flow, asceticism or active repression, marked by traits of sublimated liberation, that is, ascension, elevation of the human being. The teacher must adopt a kind and patient behavior, showing himself capable of teaching and learning from what he teaches. Quillet (1977) warns that this rule also applies to philosophers, and not obeying it reinforces obstacles to the freedom of thought of those who educate themselves with what they teach.

It is up to the educator to know how to educate with stability and balance and when he feels that he lacks such attributes, he must give up teaching, because “Even though he is very instructed, without stability (shifting character) in exercise, he cannot give the experience of opening” (BACHELARD, 1978, p.128).

Philosopher is the one who deconstructs instructions, routes and labels at school and in life; it is the one that discards useless methodologies and methods of learning that separate reason and sensitivity, that place parallel worlds that never touch or complement each other. Bachelard will teach us, according to Quillet (1977, p.9),

[...] to read like no other teacher ever did, with a disbelieving vigilance at the stories told and the most prudent discernment with imaginary material invested in the company of language, with the security of the expert who distinguishes the true from the false, when the author themselves is wrong.

Innovative thinker, curious look from a hermeneutic philosopher, with an attentive and curious look at Freudian psychoanalysis, like the Oedipus complex (SILVA, 2013); innovative thinker who makes new considerations regarding to education; innovative thinker who brings the complexes of Prometheus and Cassandra (SILVA, 2013); the first, for considering that, in the educational process, the student must surpass the parents and teachers and the second, for denouncing the false prophecies of the educator against the one whom he educates and who must, knowingly, overcome him.

With regard to complexes, Bachelard understood his stereotype in various fields of human knowledge (SILVA, 2013). Therefore, when investigating, for a long time, his works, it was possible to identify about sixty-nine complexes, stereotypes, because, even when identified, in the field of science, they resemble, in the scope of aesthetics, of the creative imagination, the fanciful, exaggerated, labeling and or deformative images.

Educator Bachelard calls into question the strength of the educator's prophetic and encouraging word. In the work *Psychoanalysis of Fire*, he affirms that the learning that frees the human being is fundamental so that he/she can turn against the masters who think that they educate, but that, in fact, maintain the deformative spirit. It is necessary to educate yourself to oppose - if necessary - the school system, because it is essential to work against what is negative, blocking, impeding, authoritarian in educators, in order to overcome obstacles posed and interposed, be more than his master, to be "himself" in the Nietzschean sense, a philosopher for whom he has a look full of admiration and approval, a Nietzsche that destroys labels and demystifies moralisms.

Bachelard dreamer of words, but it will not be as a pedagogue that he will approach childhood, but as an author of reverie, therefore, he inserts childhood in the context of reverie, but he does not treat it only as a theme, because "[...] reverie about childhood is therefore a contribution to the metaphysics of elegiac time. After all, this time of intimate elegy, this time of grief that endures is a psychological reality" (BACHELARD, 1996, p.17).

He opposes René Descartes because considers that "thinking, wanting, loving, dreaming

are just an activity of his spirit [...]" (BACHELARD, 1996, p.22). The reverie dreamer is the one who breaks thinking to achieve oneirism in order to dream with open eyes and seek happiness in the images of creative thinking.

Philosopher who defends an "open, sectorial, dynamic, militant" thinking, which, to Pessanha, in the preface to *The Right To Dream* (1994, p.v), makes it difficult to create descendants. It may be difficult, but it is worth remembering that Bachelard has gained territories and followers in many countries. Brazil, for example, is a country that attests to this fruitful and fertilizing scenario for his ideas.

Bachelard's childhood educator style is the "[...] style of respectful elevation of the steps of the being, the family and the absence of the other, a kind of eternity that immortalizes only childhood" (QUILLET, 1977, p.133). Why all the care of the educating philosopher? Because "the child is a born materialist... his first dreams are about organic substances" (BACHELARD, 1989a, p.13). The child is the being that attests to the greatness of the world around us, that feeds us, enchants us.

Quillet (1977) recalls Bachelard's implication with the heavy order element, which lacks a rhythm, a dynamism, a fast movement, which he called "the heavyweight demon", symbolizing the weight of responsibility, materiality, contrary to the lightness that marks the dynamic spirit, which rises like a flame by its own lightness, stretches our being, rises beyond any rise, moves away from the heavy, in an allusion, perhaps, to poetry ascension of Nietzsche, in the *Zarathustra* (2011).

In defense of a continuous school - the "[...] school that science must establish. Thus, social interests will be definitely reversed: society will be made by school, and not school by society" (BACHELARD, 1996, p.252). A school capable of managing a society as if it were a school and not the society managing the school as if it were a society, an example that has not worked for a long time.

Education, for Bachelard, is an education in which you can gain the autonomy to think and create, the autonomy that we have or should have to dream and work to effect an education for disobedience - "Disobeying to achieve the grace of reason, as the immediate and decisive proof

of autonomy<sup>2</sup>" (JEAN, 1989, p.17). It is up to the master to lead the student so that he/she leaves, in a lucid manner, the oneirism of the imagination, and the student is up to disobey. Thus, in this game between teacher and student, there is creative disobedience, that is, there is the strengthening of human virtue, the virtue of being able to dream and being able to think. This disobedience reveals the lightness of the spirit to dream and think, to free oneself from the heavy. With this, there is a pedagogy of becoming, of coming to be, and of being.

Recovering a childhood state in adults does not mean becoming infantilized or clinging to childhood memories or wanting to relive childhood, but valuing imaginary memory, that memory that allows us to reimagine our past in a dreamlike way, without fixations or triggering sufferings.

A pedagogy of reason can contribute to preserve childhood and the vitality of our imagination (JEAN, 1989). It is a primary pedagogy for kindergarten. Formation, on the other hand, must be understood as the formation of the scientific and poetic spirit, which means that formation contemplates the human being in all ages and dimensions of his life (JEAN, 1989).

Childhood asks for an education in the sense of a pedagogy that happens when the educator knows how to make himself a child without being a child, when he knows how to "make a fool of himself" as a resource to understand himself, to show more instead of speaking (JEAN, 1989). And "how good it would be to have a silent teacher instead of a speaking teacher... when you have so much to show, why speak? - our speech says more about ourselves than about the others..." (BACHELARD, 1977, p.30).

The educator is one who educates by avoiding psychologizing dialogues, characterized as one who behaves as if he were in a psychological interview; the educator cannot behave like an analyst, he cannot use this resource, also because this resource is an evasion of what must be worked on.

An educator is the one who feeds and feeds on a philosophy of against or an education of against: against simplicity, clarity and knowledge that ignores complexity; against a taught science and manual reading technique; against teaching what is already known, which does not contribute to scientific thinking; against the teaching of dead, frozen, stereotyped images; against authoritarian parents and teachers; against an educator / education that leaves the students to

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<sup>2</sup> "Desobedecer, escribe, para el que ha sido alcanzado por la gracia o por la razón, es la prueba inmediata y decisiva de la autonomía"

their own learning and crosses their arms - the educator needs to overcome tradition and innovate, without ignoring the rigor or fair severity, knowing how to relate to yourself, to the other, to others to turn against “a lifeless society in which we are free to do everything, but where there is nothing to do” (BACHELARD, 1977, p.90); against the burden of carrying the world's prejudices, the misunderstood epistemological obstacles that place us against science and scientific instruction and against learning itself, making it impossible to fight to be free and able to build our own autonomy.

The education proposed by the science educator is the philosophy of no, which says no to secular contemplation in philosophy and which has already been criticized by Karl Marx, Nietzsche, a philosophy against a passive, contemplative and ineffective position, against dialectical exaggerations as a solution to all contradictions of thought, against facilitating methods that replace thinking and creating with technique, which functions as a template to be filled (JEAN, 1989).

Quillet (1977, p.11) considers that, contradictorily, “Bachelard was a non-school and deeply school”. He was the one who opposed a schooling that does not allow dreaming, learning, but only repeating watertightening knowledges, an education that only has experience as a reproduction of experiences. Therefore, it is also up to the teacher to remain a student in order to understand the relationship of children, adolescents and young people with knowledge.

### Conclusion

At the end of this essay, I highlight the exemplary and educational way in which Bachelard analyzes Isidore Ducasse's<sup>3</sup> *The Songs of Maldoror* (BACHELARD, 1989b), in an attempt to sensitize his readers to the shout of hatred given by Isidore Ducasse from the four corners of school; a scream of pain from someone who is young but feels confined / imprisoned in a school space; finally, the scream of one who is obliged to repeat lessons, to be repressed all the time, to suffer teasing (like the one with a shaved head), to be forgotten by the family, to feel watched and charged all the time.

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<sup>3</sup> Isidore Ducasse (1846-1870), Uruguayan poet who lived in France, author of the work: *The songs of Maldoror*, became known by the literary pseudonym of Count de Lautréamont.

Ducasse is the expression of a counterculture in opposition to the current, misguided, austere and life-confining school culture, one that confiscates childhood, adolescence and youth; his scream is a scream against abuse and authoritarianism in the schooling process; screaming against the school like a prison, a prison system of punishments and favors; a scream in favor of those who find themselves surrounded on all sides receiving severe treatment that increases their anger in the hope of living less severe days and without violence they suffers all the time. Ultimately, his retaliations express the feeling that wanting to live can mean wanting to attack in order to live, or rather, survive (BACHELARD, 1989b). Ducasse stands against a time of emptying, of discontinuity, a time of death, of decelerating life in full bloom of age. Hence, he retaliates with a time of acceleration, from no to death that frightens him, one against death to affirm life, his life so biased, vilified.

Imaginative or reverie forces are forces that mobilize us for actions and feelings in contact with the matter of the elements - earth, water, fire and air. These imaginative forces create poetic worlds, parallel realities, express our well or bad being in the world.

The body, for Bachelard (1989a), is a place of stories, of memory, of education. Thus,

the first warm conviction is bodily well-being. It is in the flesh, in the organs, that primordial material images are born. The human face is, above all, the instrument that serves to seduce. Looking at himself, the man prepares, sharpens, shines that face, that look, all the instruments of seduction... (BACHELARD, 1989a, p.36).

Educator who taught that poetry is an educational element when the various faces of the same problem are not ignored, when ambiguity, contradiction is not ignored, because, in the game of opposites, there is life and death, sun and rain, light and darkness, good and bad, good and bad, strong and weak, awake and asleep, laughter and crying; in the poetry of pain, there is blood, death, fall, abyss, martyrdom, misfortune, imbalance, violence, aggressiveness, savagery; in the poetry of rancor, there is violence, retaliation, aggressiveness, cruelty, malice, hurt pride, cowardice, despair, suicide; in love poetry, there is light and loose laughter, the smile of things, of nature, of the elements; the stars reveal that "the moon, the night, the stars then cast their reflections on the river like flowers" (BACHELARD, 1989a, p.91). The educating poet teaches us that "the night is a substance... the night is the nocturnal matter" (1989a, p.105); that "slime is



the dust of water, like gray is the dust of fire” (1989a, p.114); that “loving the infinite universe is giving material meaning” (1989a, p.120) for planetary life; that “the great fatality of the world, hunger, belongs only to the land; here, it is prevented, ignored” (1989a, p.123). Water is the image of the feminine, the loving, immovable mother, the milk, the honey, the mucus, whose rivers are swollen breasts of milk, an imaginary milk that numbs the soul and body and creates ways to express feelings, movements, times and spaces.

Gaston Bachelard reminds us that caring cannot be forgotten for the child and for nature, that the poetics of the four elements is life that attests to the educational importance of playing, childhood reverie and adult oneirism.

The place of education at the university is identified by his claim that he felt more like a teacher than a philosopher. Teaching means learning from what is taught and to whom it is taught, and, leaving aside false modesties at the university, it can be considered a teacher the one who advances the student's culture, who makes himself understood by the student, who identifies and welcomes the learning levels of the one he educates.

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