

## The ontological space in the imaginary of Gaston Bachelard and the construction of an affective landscape<sup>1</sup>.

*O espaço ontológico no imaginário de Gaston Bachelard e a construção de uma paisagem afetiva*

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### Abstract:

The search for an ontology of space in Gaston Bachelard's works and the intercession of phenomenology and imaginary-driven neurobiology comprise the approach herein utilized. We present the fundamental role of space as a phenomenon within consciousness and the constitution of a being. Landscapes are sensible dimensions, affective-aesthetic, emotional and symbolical of life, generating primordial images. Our objective is to contextualize the roots of such phenomenology and present its potential as a study of consciousness, alongside current neurobiological interpretations by António Damásio, referent to cultural and affective consciousness.

**Keywords:** literature, narrative, sensibility, lived space, culture.

### Resumo:

A abordagem que adotamos neste estudo é resultado da busca por uma ontologia do espaço na obra de Gaston Bachelard e da intersecção entre fenomenologia e neurobiologia a partir do imaginário. Apresentamos o papel fundamental do espaço como fenômeno na consciência e constituição do ser, assim como a paisagem como dimensão sensível, estético-afetiva, emocional e simbólica do vivido, que

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gera imagens primordiais. Nosso objetivo é contextualizar as raízes dessa fenomenologia e apresentar suas possibilidades de desenvolvimento, como um estudo da consciência, associado às atuais interpretações neurobiológicas de Antonio Damásio sobre a consciência cultural e emocional.

**Palavras-chave:** literatura, narrativa, sensibilidade, espaço vivido, cultura.

## Introduction

*Geographers can very well bring us, from their faraway travels,  
photography of villages and cottages.  
Our past of legends transcends everything that has ever been seen.*

G. Bachelard

It is a fascinating adventure to embark in a journey of knowledge within the phenomenology of imagination presented in the works of Gaston Bachelard, a philosopher who created and lived the experience of the complexity concept in his philosophy, and gifted us a legacy capable of embracing and permitting numerous new thesis and thoughts. This research, however, will endeavor to explore the ontology of space in Gaston Bachelard's ideas, especially those in his studies of the imaginary, or, as he would have defined them, his nocturnal works. Therefore, the central scope of this research comprises the existence and manifestation of a spatial consciousness in Bachelardian works, as well as its relevance and affective, emotional, mnemonic-imaginary nature in the philosopher's poetic subject, chosen by him to create an intuitive, metaphysical and phenomenological cosmogony in a rich gallery of loved images, revealed, then, as affective landscape. Our second objective, still within a perspective of understanding the importance given to space, is to reveal, from an individual's intimate topography, the affective outspread of a person's landscape in their imaginary images. The third and last objective consists of exploring the potential of Bachelardian phenomenology in its encounter with neurobiology, within the concept of present consciousness created by António Damásio. We start from *A poética do espaço*, one of G. Bachelard's last and most important works, in his studies of philosophy of the imaginary, following in the footsteps of his works dedicated to poetic imagination – fire, water, earth and air –, the cosmogony of the four elements which constitute a landscape, in hopes of highlighting the importance of space;

space's presence as a fundamental element of all poetic reverie and as a distinctive element of narrative, oftentimes central in literary works.

In order to achieve these objectives, at first, our methodological approach will be to explore the state of art within Bachelardian works, searching for origins and influences, especially directed towards the aforementioned frame of work – the ontology of space –, as, regarding its considerable scope, chiefly in its bipolarity, as defined by Canguilhem<sup>2</sup>, it becomes necessary to limit a path to be followed. Next, we will explore its opening, its contemporary becoming, that is to say, the possibilities following the Bachelardian thought. Certainly, the becoming advocated by Bachelard is already here and puts us in the position of spreading the poetic-philosophical richness of the imaginary. Understanding his thoughts as an opening is what Gaston Bachelard always taught, both in his epistemology as well as his phenomenology of imagination, a type of metaphysics. Following his lessons, we postulate the hypothesis that the nocturnal Bachelard, whose works approach images, is the one who dedicates special attention to space. A lived space, that is to say. The landscape elements in their symbolism, within water and its rocks, the slopes of earth and dreams of air, connect to the lived space as well as binding the imaginary to a grand *tableaux* of poetic-literary geography.

In conclusion, within the footsteps of a Bachelardian phenomenological image-landscape, and supported by the theory proposed by Damásio on the creation of cultural images and consciousness, we suggest imagining a field of images, in which space, as landscape, adheres to the images themselves as well as compose them, especially within mythical-symbolic and literary narratives. This research concludes with the poetics of being in its emotion and the confluence of phenomenology, neurobiology and the cultural consciousness of today.

### **Gaston Bachelard's Phenomenology: Roots, Reflection, And The Role Of Ontological Space**

In this investigation, we ask: what comprises Bachelard's phenomenological thoughts? Why does space appear as a guiding axis in his works about the imaginary? In order to answer these questions, at first we follow clues left by Bachelard throughout his research on poetic images, and later, we analyze the state of art of Bachelardian phenomenology focusing on authors who have done epistemological studies

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2 G. Canguilhem, in the introduction of *Études* – a collection of articles by Gaston Bachelard – affirms that in 1938, by publishing at the same time *A formação do espírito científico* e *A Psicanálise do fogo*, Bachelard reveals the cohesive but disconcerting bipolarity of his philosophy.

of his works, in his nocturnal studies (poetic phenomenology), as well as diurnal (scientific rationalism), such as Lescure, Canguilhem, Ginestier, Quillet, Gouhier, Dagognet, Pessanha, Almeida, Simão and Pariente. Examining Bachelard's works it is possible to observe that the journey and acquirement of spatial sense arise together with the image in consciousness; images are spatial in Bachelardian phenomenology, and this perspective seems to approximate that of Heidegger's *Dasein*, conveying the idea of a *being in the world*, of *existence*, that is to say, *there's a spatiality in being*. According to Holzer, the Heideggerian *Dasein*, among many interpretations, can have the meaning of *being-here* in which spatiality is responsible for the affective-recollective sensible dimension, the emotional dimension. To this perspective we can also include imaginary activity, as another phenomenological region, in the narrative construction of a being in its temporality, manifest beyond the affective memory of landscape, the lived space which also encourages imagination.

Bachelard focus on the content of images, on the their tone within the consciousness of a person, that which gives rise to innovative images, amplified and in full bloom within the becoming, independent of past or perception. Even though this clue, of becoming, was left by Bachelard, he affirms, explicitly, in his poetic of space – the highest point in articulating the phenomenology of imagination – that his philosophy of poetics derives from the phenomenology studied by Eugène Minkowski.

Bachelard, however, presents yet another clue regarding the Heideggerian phenomenology: the concept of *direct ontology*<sup>3</sup>, which considers the being unto itself, that is to say, the poetic image as a unique being, with its own dynamic. Therefore, however indirect, Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology reflects Heidegger's and Husserl's, especially as to the way its ontology was composed: «In it's newness, it's activity, the poetic image has its own being, its own dynamic. It follows a direct ontology. This is the ontology with which we desire to work. Therefore, at the opposite of causality, of repercussion, so keenly studied by Minkowski, is that we hope to find the true measure of a being in a poetic image.» (Bachelard, *A poética* 2).

Bachelard was a critic of Husserl's phenomenology<sup>4</sup>, according to studies done by Almeida, Simão and Pessanha, as well as a critic of Bergson and the French school of thought at the time, which included Sartre. Almeida (20) highlights the profound differences between Bachelard and Husserl, affirming that the exact counterpoint between Husserl's and Bachelard's perspective consists of the Husserlian teleology which conflicted with the constant transformation in base notions of knowledge in

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3 Heidegger creates a radical transformation in the traditional sense of ontology. From Heidegger a direct ontology is conceived. About this study refer to Holzer.

4 See BARSOTTI, B. Bachelard critique de Husserl. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009.

Bachelard, as with uncertainty which is one of the matrices of modernity in science and also “the non-Cartesianism of the Bachelardian epistemology which completely rejects recapturing this philosophy as it was utilized by Husserl” (Almeida, 20). That said, we can observe that this phenomenology, the one created by Husserl, pushes away from the meaning which the word has had throughout the history of philosophy and, mainly, from Hegel’s. Even with different ontological variations between Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Bachelard, or even Merleau-Ponty, who convey different specificity, each variety possess a Husserlian base. Alliez (72), though criticizing the french school of thought and advocating for the impossibility of phenomenology in French philosophy, affirms that the general way in which phenomenology presents itself was first created by Husserl. Each philosopher, then, transformed it, augmenting or profoundly altering its ontological foundation, opening and enabling it in different ways. According to Dartigues, Husserl as the primordial foundation of an elaborated phenomenological thought, intended for phenomenology to be a universal ontology. Books about the history of philosophy inform of a series of disagreements among scholars who placed phenomenology in philosophy and transformed it also in a theoretical contribution of access to scientific knowledge. However, the investigations which align with the similarities of thought between Bachelard and Heidegger, though never registered by Bachelard, as done with Minkowski, present each correspondence as fully possible: “Martin Heidegger who, if not conceding a special attention to images, assigns to language, in special poetic language, a decisive ontological function which can be recognized as very similar to Bachelard’s” (Almeida, 49). Following the same perspective as Almeida, studies done by Simão also point the possibilities of establishing a relationship between Bachelard and Heidegger, each highlighting the potentiality of comparison and the proficiency of differences: «Comparing Bachelard to Heidegger [...] ‘the solitude of Heideggerian *Dasein* is exile and prison, and Bachelard’s is joyful living’. It would be impossible to forget the human presence in the world which shapes images» (Simão, 75). According to Almeida (51-53) establishing a connection between Bachelard and Heidegger is very promising, as it is possible to identify, in both of them, besides a direct ontology, a similarity regarding the interdependency of subject and object, the relationship between Heidegger’s idea of poetic language and Bachelard’s poetic image, as well as the Bachelardian concept of space appreciated in the poetics of space, which has similarities to the concept of *Dasein*; the existence, the being in place, that is to say, being as space. In Holzer’s interpretation of *Dasein*, following an ontological approach, existence would be impossible without place. Almeida and Simão investigate Ramnoux’s reflections in his interesting article *Por um novo tecido linguístico da filosofia*, in which the concept of space present in Bachelard’s poetics of space is examined, along with its relationship, limitations and oppositions to Heidegger’s work:

Bachelard introduces the example of *l'être-là*, without conceding space, in the linguistic fabric of his own language, to the Heideggerian *Dasein*, without mentioning Heidegger. In another part of chapter "Le Cogito du rêveur" from *Poétique de la Réverie*, Bachelard introduces the «being thrown in the world» without referencing «*Verworfenheit*» or Heidegger. Would he have read this work? It would not have been for a lack of knowledge of German, which he would have probably learned at his Liceu in *Champagne*, unless he had learned it by himself, reading poets. Bachelard often references German poets, specially Novalis and Rilke, in German or in French. He does not only admire them, but also searches for the poetic, philosophical, and poetic-philosophical possibilities within the German language. Therefore, he avoided or rejected Heidegger. (Ramnoux, *Pour un nouveau*, p. 524, our own translation)<sup>5</sup>.

According to Ramnoux (*Pour un nouveau*, p. 525), in order to imprint his own thoughts onto the French linguistic fabric, in *Poética do Espaço*, Bachelard wanted to situate his critique within *être-là* and not *Dasein*, and this is well highlighted in his linguistic plan, which does not mean those Heideggerian reflexes had not been present, also, within the poetic and oneiric plan of reverie. However, for a number of reasons which still merit being explored, more so historically, Bachelard does not refer to Heidegger and attributes the root of his phenomenology to Minkowski, who greatly influenced him, as observed, especially in his works *A poética do espaço* and *A chama de uma vela*. Minkowski had, in turn, among other influences, Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, as well as Henri Bergson's work. When examining the phenomenology studies in Minkowski's work<sup>6</sup> it is possible to observe he also established a comparison between the two authors – Bergson and Husserl – regarding the importance which their two works acquired within that context: «This is how, nowadays, Husserl's phenomenology and Bergson's philosophy are born [...]. These two concurrent thoughts will soon exert a deep influence in contemporary thinking.» (Minkowski, *Le temps*, p. 3, our own translation<sup>7</sup>). Minkowski was an enthusiast of Husserl's and Bergson's ideas and such phenomenological approach was also a symptom of its time. That is to say, even though Bachelard silenced or opposed the phenomenological current of German philosophy, its traces and its authors reflected on Bachelard's phenomenological origins, even though he established a very unique dynamic to his phenomenological approach. These nuances, therefore, allow

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<sup>5</sup> In the original: «Bachelard introduit l'exemple de l'être-là, sans faire place, dans le tissu de sa propre langue, au Dasein heideggerien, ni même nommer Heidegger. Ailleurs, dans le chapitre « Le Cogito du rêveur » de La Poétique de la rêverie, Bachelard introduit l'être-jeté-au-monde, sans faire place à la Verworfenheit, ni davantage nommer Heidegger. L'avait-il lu seulement dans son texte ? Ce n'était pas faute de connaître la langue allemande, qu'il avait apprise, vraisemblablement dans son lycée de Champagne, à moins qu'il ne l'ait apprise en autodidacte, en lisant ses poètes. Il cite souvent les poètes allemands, parmi d'autres, le plus souvent, Novalis, et Rilke, poète allemand, en allemand et en français. Non seulement il admire, mais il envie presque les possibilités poétiques, philosophiques, et poético-philosophiques de la langue allemande. Pourtant il a évité, ou rejeté Heidegger.»

<sup>6</sup> Doctor at the psychiatric hospital Henri Rousselle and at the Health Clinic of St-Mandé. See MINKOWSKI, E. *Le temps vécu*, 1933.

<sup>7</sup> In the original: «C'est ainsi que sont nées de nos jours la phénoménologie de Husserl et la philosophie de Bergson [...] Ces deux courants n'ont pas tardé à exercer une influence profonde sur toute la pensée contemporaine. C'est qu'ils correspondaient à un besoin réel et profond de notre être.»

us to talk about a Bachelardian phenomenology, as, more than fixating on an eidetic reduction, he advocates a dynamism of images. Bachelard inscribed originality to his philosophy and freedom to his thoughts. Therefore, many philosophical concepts take on completely new connotations and unfold into his very thoughts. Pariente interprets fundamental concepts through a Bachelardian expression: dialectics to Bachelard, for instance, do not have a connection with Plato's understanding of the same concept, nor Hegel's or Marx's. When Bachelard quotes Hegel he does it to highlight a separation from his construction of dialectics and Hegelian philosophy. Bachelard, then, distances himself from Hegel, Kant, and Freud, as proposed by Simão, and approaches Einstein, Minkowski, and Jung. Bachelard freely reads and reflects on whatever he desires, without neglecting rigor and quality in his works. Nevertheless, that element also brings difficulties: authors read by Bachelard, sometimes, are hard to pinpoint, as which the emblematic case of the concept *rhythmanalysis* which, in *Dialética da duração*, Bachelard attributes to Portuguese-Brazilian author Lúcio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos.

In regards to the relationship between Bachelard and Bergson, according to Quillet (48), the *Dialética da duração* can be understood as a response to *La Pensée et le Mouvant* from 1934. However, in the sense of opposing to Bergson, Bachelard would reveal multiplicities of reticence rather than a radical opposition to his theory. Ginestier, on the other hand, affirms that Bergson works carved a deep influence in Bachelard, and in attacking it upfront, first by questioning the fact of (us) being excused from the Bergsonian duration, and second by creating a theory that by far and large complements the Bergsonian theory, thus creating a full theory, which in essence should not need any complement. Ginestier (28) lay outs a parallel between Bergson's works and Bachelard's, presenting his "A intuição do instante" and "A dialética da duração" as refusals of Bergson's ideas, author, therefore, who greatly influenced him.

A debate with Bergson, if not previously established, was at least indicated in Minkowski's work and when investigating Minkowski's influence over Bachelard, it is possible to observe that many themes investigated by Bachelard were also present in Minkowski's work.

Minkowski pays especial attention to the matter of time and space, attributing to them a central role not only in psychology and philosophy, but in contemporary culture. To Minkowski, however, time is thought as lived time; in his work *Le temps vécu* both time and space should be closely examined by each one of us beyond technique and progress.

Minkowski's lived time was time assimilated by space, but not from a spatial perspective and problems imposed by modern physics and the theory of relativity, which according to him progressed from abstraction to abstraction. He put this approach as background and took a step away from it in order to bring in what was peculiar about lived time. Minkowski's phenomenology, in his *Para uma Cosmologia*, presents elements which truly are also present in Bachelard's works, such as interiority and

exteriority, psychic phenomena; he pays especial attention to space, more intently in the chapters *Espaço primitivo* and *Retenção*. He also discusses the senses and perception, mainly in the chapter *Nós vemos com os olhos?* Minkowski himself affirms that the three books he had published are related. First there was *Em uma cosmologia*, then *A Esquizofrenia*, in 1927, then *Tempo Vivido*, in 1933, composing a synthesizing agglomerate of his ideas. Minkowski's influence can be noticed in Bachelard's last work – posthumously published – *Fragments D'Une Poétique Du Feu*, which shows in his daughter's Suzanne Bachelard preface of the book, commenting a previous idea of title for Bachelard's *Fragmentos De Uma Poética do Fogo*, which would have been *Le feu vécu* – Lived fire – and how in the whole of his nocturne works about poetics, for Bachelard existence is a lived space.

Bachelard's phenomenology of imagination, therefore, pulls from Minkowski's phenomenology and is comprised of a study about the poetic image when «the being from images emerges to consciousness as direct product of a soul, of a being in its actuality» (Bachelard, *A poética* 2); it also deals with the trans-subjectivity or intersubjectivity of images, the variational – reflective traces of a *Husserl-Haideggerian* phenomenology – that is to say, the annulment of the duality between subject and object and variational ideation. An image is not an object, it's a being. This way, poetry is a phenomenology of soul – a document of a dreaming consciousness. The phenomenology of soul reveals the first commitment of Bachelardian phenomenology with the imaginary: to feel and love a creation so abundantly as to go where everything originates and acquires meaning; the creative consciousness and the receptive consciousness become one: «within resonance we hear the poem; from repercussion we tell it, it is ours. Repercussion operates an inversion of being. The poet's being seems to be ours» (Bachelard, *A poética* 7).

Should not a phenomenology which puts consciousness in the cultural-psychological also consider it from a biological, neural dimension? It is important to point out that by choosing Minkowski's phenomenology Bachelard approaches it also from a medical understanding. Minkowski had already debated with Bergson about memories from pathological cases, «in order to show that not even the idea of a measurable time, part of the regular domain, nor the motion of disorientation in time, part of the pathological domain, can not extinguish the phenomenon of lived time [...] To start with, we do not live time only as a perpetual sequence of elements from our consciousness» (Minkowski, *Le temps* 13-14, our translation<sup>8</sup>). Minkowski, therefore, already had exposed a posture against time as duration, measurable, and for lived time.

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<sup>8</sup> In the original «[...] Ici, nous les avons mentionnés que pour montrer que ni l'idée du temps mesurable, dans le domaine du normal ni la notion de désorientation dans les temps, dans le domaine du pathologique, ne pouvaient épuiser le phénomène du temps vécu [...] Tout d'abord nous ne vivons pas du tout le temps uniquement comme une succession perpétuelle des divers éléments de notre conscience [...]».



Many questionings regarding memory had already been proposed by Minkowski, for instance: the abstract temporal order of our consciousness and its selective characteristics, to which Minkowski presented cases both in the regular domain as well as pathological, in order to illustrate its more subtle reality, deeper in its projections of consciousness over time and space.

It is clear that Minkowski's approach contributed to the critique Bachelard makes in his *Matéria e Memória*, and more importantly, it contributed to Bachelard emphasizing the ontology of space in his own phenomenology.

Within phenomenology as an understanding of images from the conscience, its origin can be traced to Bachelard, Minkowski and Bergson, to which we will try to connect a more contemporary study by Damásio<sup>9</sup>, taking into consideration that at the base of Bachelard's phenomenology there was a medical understanding of pathology, among other influences, reflections and rejections. All of this because to talk, today, still, about phenomenology – as phenomena from consciousness – is to deal with a complexity that remains polemic and far from being understood.

### **Self-Awareness: Image And Emotion**

Damásio, in a calm, lovely, expressive language, explains to his audience the intricate implications that link neurobiology to conscious image, to the unconscious, emotion, and culture. We shall begin examining his works with the concept of being, or, as called by Damásio, *self*<sup>10</sup>, (*si* or *si mesmo*, in Portuguese) and given the size limitations of this article, finish by looking at its intersection with the phenomenology of lived space in its Bachelardian roots, the unconscious, and image. In order to explore and create perspective on which new directions the phenomenology of space can reach, we ask the question: which new meanings of space, as a phenomenon of consciousness, redefine being? Space is a rather internal dimension, that is to say, it affects, interacts and specifies an interior life.

Looking towards the self, in its direct ontology, Damásio brings a new consideration: that a being is inside its own awareness of self. Does this idea allow the thought that beings can be distinguished between those that have and those that do not have an awareness of their own selves? We can say that Damásio's reflection illuminates new horizons on consciousness phenomena. No more the being unto

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<sup>9</sup> António R. Damásio is a professor and director of the Neurology Department at Iowa University and Professor Adjunct at Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

<sup>10</sup> In the Portuguese translation of his work, Damásio preferred to use *si*, which was a perfect fit, instead of using *self*, as was the case in other romance languages. In an a Brazilian version, it would be possible to understand it as *mim mesmo*.

itself, neither the being in another, from traditional ontology, but a being in itself and aware of its own self, as not all beings in themselves possess awareness of themselves. He uses a metaphor about light penetrating an artist's stage to illustrate the entrance into the birth of consciousness, or into the awareness of a fabulous and impactful happening inside the self, in the world created by the mind. That is to say, «the way we enter consciousness and its main protagonist the sense of self» (Damásio, *O sentimento*, p. 22). When affirming that no aspect of the mind is easy to investigate and, that for those seeking to understand the fundamentals of the mind, consciousness must generally be seen as the main problem, Damásio unequivocally touches upon a primordial question in phenomenology, the study of consciousness phenomena. «If the elucidation of the mind is the last frontier of life sciences, consciousness seems to be the last mystery in understanding the mind [...] Consciousness is the critical biological function that allows us to experience sadness or joy, to feel pain or pleasure, shame or pride, to cry for a death or lost love. Both *pathos* and desire are products of consciousness. Without it, none of these personal states could be recognized by any of us» (Damásio, *O sentimento*, p. 22-23).

This first circumscription of consciousness given by Damásio allows us to reaffirm our understanding of it, established through his reflection on consciousness as profoundly linked to space as a way of being and feeling, that is to say, as a way of being from an awareness of self. In Portuguese this is a broader issue, because the verb *ser* (to be) can have two interpretations, both implicating spatiality, emotion, and perception. The first interpretation, *estar*, indicates brevity, as in being afraid of something in a specific occasion, but not necessarily having a phobia of something. You could *be* in a city, but not belong to that city. Therefore, this means there is a temporary being and one that lasts. The being changes according to the duration of its actions, its feelings, and its place of existence. In this perspective, paradoxically, you can *be* without *being*, but space is always an extension of the *self*, the Bachelardian *être-là*, and the Heideggerian *Dasein*, all of which imply an ontology of space, as each philosophy, within its own language, contributes to an understanding of being which is self in a lived space. And would not the lived space be an ontological instance which condenses image, memory, and sensibility?

From consciousness we can discuss aesthetic apprehension of a landscape elaborated in the corollary of our emotions and feelings, as a space in consciousness; affectionately, kept within our memories and present in our images also as a source of creation. Thinking the landscape as a sensitive space and also as an immediate *image departure* inside the consciousness is the task we set out to present inside this topic. According to Damásio, the process of understanding human culture and human feelings has yet to receive adequate attention. To him the mind is cultural and the motivation behind language, arts, and religion. Feelings and emotions need to be identified as cultural response. Here we reaffirm the idea that the cultural mind has an affective landscape as support. Feelings and sensations are also

profoundly spatial. Such spatiality includes lived worlds and dreamed worlds. Culture, nature, and feelings are one only being in the landscape, when considering Damásio's (*A estranha ordem*, p. 17) ideas, the association between cultures and feelings and the homeostasis that strengthens connections with nature and deepens a humanization of the cultural process. With the intent of presenting facts linked to the creation of minds that think, elaborate narratives and meanings, remember the past and imagine the future, Damásio (*A estranha ordem* 26) presents the structure of feelings and of consciousness as responsible for reciprocal links between minds, exterior worlds, and fundamental processes of life, in which humans would be capable of living sensations from banal to sublime, from the pleasure that constitutes a reaction to taste, smell, food, wine, physical comfort, to the astonishment and enlightenment that comes from contemplating a landscape, or the deep affection felt towards another being.

The fact of the matter is that both subject as well as culture and feelings operate inside an ontological as well as phenomenological space, as locus of life and its homeostatic characteristics. Would the genesis of images depend on all these conditions? Inside our consciousness do we always see our bodies in a place? Is *self a landscape-self*?

That which is remembered, imagined, felt condenses the experiences lived in a non-geometric space and in non-chronological time; it aggregates the spheres of an articulated being with the solidarity of imagination, with perception and memories, creating images which if not visible, then are at least visionary, after all, in our consciousness, has imagination not always been a cinema *avant la lettre*? If perception provides deformed copies, as established by Bachelard, maybe therein we can find another suggestion: independent of a seeing organ, consciousness might have its own "optic" device, its own "eye" which allow us to see *images from imagination*. What does contemporary science, with its advances, enlightens about these questions and antinomy present in the approach of the imaginary?

## Consciousness And Affective Landscape

Damásio separates emotion from feelings and presents these distinctions from a neurobiological perspective; this way, emotions (anger, sadness, happiness, fear) are the most intelligent heirs of vital regulation and compose actions along with ideas and ways of thinking, emotional feelings are a perception composed of a bodily reaction during emotion, feelings are images of actions and not action itself.

The feelings of emotion, on the other hand, refer to the next stage, they come after emotion, representing the last undertaking of the emotional process, that is to say, the perception of what happened during emotion. Then, according to Damásio, from a neural perspective the cycle of emotion-feeling starts in the brain from perception and considering a stimulus. As a more complex program, emotion

includes cognitive modes, but it is a universe of actions taken by our bodies. It is possible to understand that the sensation is obtained from data directly from perception, through the sense organs. Emotion and sentiment are related, but for Damásio they are essentially different, emotion is a mental state which provokes corporeal alterations, involving a program of actions. For instance, if we are at a certain place, we can feel with every pore the landscape sensations, through our sense organs which capture them and such a state may unfold feelings which allows us to access a memory and induce a commotion which makes us laugh or cry, but at the same time we are this place which affects us and to which we project the force of our imagination in a two-way street; then, which relationship between autonomy and interdependency can we establish from perception, emotion, feelings, imagination and memory?

Bachelard's ontological space is also deeply associated with feelings and emotion.

Would not our feelings, our sketches of feelings, all the most secret and profound states of our intimate self be intertwined in the most odd of ways, with landscape, with season, with a certain property of air, with a breath? [...] It is understood, then, that von Holfmannsthal can speak about "landscapes of the soul", infinite landscapes like space and time which apparition evoke in us a new sense, superior to all senses ( Bachelard, *O ar...*, p. 174).

The blue sky feelings, memories of anguish or happiness advent from atmospheric states, of contemplative states and states of the soul. Each landscape is a topography of the self in a space inhabited by consciousness. Bachelard, with the intention of delimiting the ontology of image in the metaphysics of imagination, credits that which corresponds to perception and which corresponds to memory as distinct from the faculty of imagination, even though he does not fail to recognize, considering the dialectics between natal home and oneiric home, for instance, the dialectics in the connections between memory and imagination.

Today, neurobiology offers that our brains possess regions responsible for our feelings. Damásio (*O livro*, p. 153) affirms that the concept of an insular cortex is an important basis to feelings and that has been proved, as well as the importance of cerebral chemistry in humor reactions or in their alterations both normal and pathological. It is know, today, that cerebral chemistry interferes in our moods. Damásio also discusses mental images and memory, bringing elements to an understanding of these psychic instances and, why not, phenomenological?

Damásio also presents that an instance is only recorded if it is emotionally useful and somehow unbalanced consciousness; the inconvenience of that, however, being Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, that at different levels could be a discerning ability. "As long as a scene has some value, as long as it has height of emotion, the brain captures images, sounds, smells, and flavors, in a multi-media register, to be recovered at a given time" (Damásio, *O livro*, p. 168).

He arrives at a primordial question in his neurobiological approach of memory, that “to understand how it all works, we must unveil from the brain the secrets of “a certain way” and find it “in a certain place”. That is one of contemporary neuroscience’s most complex problems” (Damásio, *O livro* p. 169).

We affirm that it is also a complex question in a phenomenological approach. Within this web of relationships herein established, between the consciousness’ becoming and its imagination faculties, remembering and feeling, Minkowski, Bachelard, and Damásio (and why not Proust and Bergson) are understood, as, perhaps, a diachronic perspective to solve the ontological problem of lived space.

Damásio explains that beyond perceptual images, advent of various sensorial domains, the brain has to keep a space for pattern storage and also a way to recover them so that, later, somewhere, reproduction can work, and in that moment full memory is achieved. In that way, to Damásio (*O livro...* p. 171), the brain keeps a memory of that which happened in our own past, and many times in the past of our biological species and in our culture. He does not mention this, but this very definition of a memory connect to a biological and cultural past can be immediately understood and connected to Jung’s archetype idea. Damásio adds the fact that we learn by interacting, not by passively receiving, and that is the essence of a “Proustian effect” within memory, reason as to why many times we remember in context and not isolated happenings. In Bachelard’s (*A poética...*p. 18) critique of Bergson’s *Matéria e Memória*, he complains that imagination barely combines memories and advocates in favor of a Proustian memory, because, within poetic memory, Bergson would clearly be beneath Proust. Experience limits, in Proustian *recherche*, a sensual and sentimental space, touched and comprised of time as synthesis of what is lived. Imagination, to Bachelard the biggest potency of human nature, comes from a function of what is unreal, poetry, to waken up a being from its sleep, and in its habits activate the imaginary and a certain attraction which gathers images around a space, in the relation between remembered matter and imagined matter. Even though Bachelard always prioritizes the imagined image, to an understanding of consciousness, it is immensely important this interactivity of imagination with memory, sensations, feelings and emotions, which are molded from Marcel Proust’s work, for instance, and that today are seen, to neurobiology, as a capacity to move within a complex world, of memory and of innovative solution creations to a problem, and even to navigate an imaginary future.

## Conclusion

If memory and imagination are distinct psychic instances and imagination always seems the more seductive and mysterious of consciousness' faculties, it is undeniable that between them there is complete interaction and interdependency, just as between feelings and emotions.

Pondering that we arrive at two questions: is it possible to make phenomenology and neurobiology meet? And, since both investigate an understanding of consciousness, would there be benefits to both sides which comprise these fields? We have no intention of answering these questions, but from them suggest a map of open possibilities, both to what corresponds a certain update to investigations of the imaginary, as well as its role on understanding the ontological space within our contemporary sensibility.

Consciousness is illuminated by a new Damasian neurobiological light, the uncontrollable forces of the unconscious<sup>11</sup>, from a Freudian perspective, and it becomes *ignis fatuus*, opening a new path to valuing a conscious mind. However, to what is correspondent to Bachelardian phenomenology, reverie as the waken dream of a poet in his lived word, it presents an intentional conscience and brings Bachelardian phenomenology, in its daily order, to re-compose a contemporary theoretic map of studies of the imaginary. Within this revolution of studies of conscience, we ask ourselves: where are the images? And even if we now more clearly see the mechanisms of memory and remembering, the mystery still falls to forgetfulness. However, within these terms, what really is conscience and not conscience? What are images? Damásio proposes the concept of conscience as a mental state in which we are aware of our own existence e the existence of that which surrounds us, that is to say, the space in which we exist. In that way, to neurobiology, conscience is a mental state and if there is no mind, there is no conscience: “conscience is a mental state to which the process of being was added” ( Damásio, *O livro...* p. 199).

Conscience, however, cannot be simply understood as an awoken state, even though being awake is a condition to being conscient. And inside the conscious mind, images are the main element of fluidity in sensorial modalities. When Damásio (*O sentimento...* p. 631) uses the term image, he is referring to mental images. It is possible to carry this definition to an approach of images in conscience, or imaginary images. However, what is the relationship between memory images and imagination images? And,

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<sup>11</sup> Damásio (2017 22) declares, regarding the Freudian unconscious, that there is only one remark by Freud – from his last article published in London, in 1938 – which he considers plausible: that the mind is the absolutely natural result of evolution and is mostly non-conscious, internal and hidden. This is the only way that Damásio accepts the possibility of a Freudian unconscious.

between both these images and emotion? And between sensibility and forgetfulness? Emotions, however, guide our behavior as much as or even more than, within certain contexts and reasons. The very feelings, in this understanding, come from a mixed perception. In studies of memory function, it has been observed that a memory activated by a certain stimulus, of whichever order, artistic or narrative, for instance, creates images and these provoke emotions which result in an engine to new elaborations. What is important is that new scientific approaches of neuroscience seem to put, ever more, the necessity of complementing a phenomenological approach of conscience, as it seems to not be possible to understand imagination, memory, and sensibility as separate entities, as if they belong to the same conscience inside its own ontology. However, neurobiology, in a positive way, seems to demystify the unconscious in Damásio's interpretative axis, and sheds light on other studies of the imaginary. From this perspective, there still is a lot of investigative work to be done on the shores of the rivers of image and the imaginary.

We conclude, therefore, with a phenomenology in favor of a conscious mind within an understanding left by Bachelard, around the image of *Ophelia*, which would surprise a non-reader if spoken to about the beauty, the seduction, and the charm of a corpse dragged by the waters of a clear river, tangled within herbs and flowers: daisies, poppies, roses, and lilies. Within the realm of conscience, there still is the semiotic perspective, which proposes that it is only possible to see an image if it has already been seen, as an image emerges new and powerful inside culture and soon becomes a reference, being recreated in varying outfits, accessories, masks. Recognizing it is an important task within the intertextual circuit of image. As the example of Ophelia, which has multiplied in various images, beyond literature, painting, cinema, marketing, as a phenomena of conscience it multiplies, also, because it preserves many variations of beauty, symbolism, emotion, and mystery. The mystery of emotion, to conclude with, renovates itself as a possible path to revitalizing imagination and bringing us back home, conscient of being ourselves.

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