Towards a new idea of literature: the concept of imagination in interwar France

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My research aims to explain the reasons and conditions of the renewal of the aesthetic reflection on the concept of “Imagination” in interwar France. Considering the different theories of imagination elaborated by authors such as Gaston Bachelard, André Breton, Jean-Paul Sartre, Roger Caillois, and Armand Petitjean and their mutual relations, I wish to analyze the role of this complex and multifaceted notion in the cultural context of the period. More specifically my interdisciplinary research tries to connect these investigations into imagination to the need to respond to a “crisis of literature” by redefining its theoretical role as it faced the new paradigms of human sciences and of the “scientific spirit” developing in this period. The concept of “imagination”, rethought in a problematic dialectic with the Romantic legacy, seems to be a fundamental instrument in the creation of projects of renewed humanism and, as a consequence, one of the most precious (and most neglected) keys to understanding the changes of Interwar culture in France.