

Il ruolo delle circostanze nella filosofia naturale di Leopardi

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Abstract

The Role of Circumstances in the Natural Philosophy of Leopardi

Leopardi was not only a great poet and writer. He was also an enthusiastic scholar of the scientific thought of his time and an original natural philosopher. And it is in this respect, which is rarely taken into consideration, that some of the ideas and intuitions written in his Zibaldone, speak portentously to certain fundamental developments in contemporary science, particularly those related to the study of chaotic and unpredictable phenomena and to the complexity of nature and the living. On the basis of a careful observation of the circumstances and contradictions that one encounters in nature, and of a deep philosophical reflection on their possible sources, Leopardi criticizes the belief of mechanistic science that the study of diversity and complexity might be reduced to a unique physical-mathematical model, and to this he opposes a non-reductionist paradigm closer to an organicistic and changing idea of nature. Moreover, Leopardi was opposed to a particular form of positivism, which established the ideal of mathematical abstraction and exactness as the unique model through which rationally understand natural and human phenomena. Instead, he ascribed an essential role to the creativity and imagination in nature and knowledge.

Keywords: circumstances; contradictions; nature; complexity; philosophy; science.