

"ON THE DAY THAT CAETANO INVITED A MAN TO GO UP STAGE"

Rhetoric of the masculine

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At the end of the session, João wonders: but what kind of a man am I?

João is a bachelor. He lives alone and works as an engineer for a big company in the field of communications.

Being extremely formal and strict, João is considered a model to be looked up to by the other professionals. Therefore, he has reached a prominent position in the company.

João works for 10 to 11 hours on weekdays and, on weekends, he often needs to go to the office "to see to small tasks".

João is not a very sociable person, and he does not seem to be very open to anything that is not related to work. He prefers being alone and he doesn't allow anyone to come too close to him.

He has a history of occasional meetings with prostitutes, in which, most of the times, he had no intention of any kind of physical contact. He simply wanted them around as quiet and as harmless as possible.

João pays for the women not to move, he pays for them not to desire him.

He has come to psychoanalysis after the breaking-up of a brief romantic relationship.

At the age of 34, that had been his first slightly stable relationship with a woman.

He narrates a series of episodes in which he shows signs of uneasiness in dealing with affection, feelings and emotions.

In this strange and unknown territory freely introduced by his girlfriend, João obsessively sets the limits to avoid getting lost. He specifies a determined number of hours to be with her. Whenever she invites him out, to parties or to any other place, he previously schedules the time of arrival and departure, as well as the amount of time they will stay at the specific place.

Overwhelmed by the unforeseeable new world offered by his girlfriend, João tries his best to adjust this new world to the formality of the rules that regulates himself.

During the sessions, he says how much she confuses and intimidates him with the exuberance of her femininity and with her simple, carefree way of living.

When invited to romantic games (besides the fact of having been chosen as a mate), João hesitates and seems to get lost.

Memories from a distant time burst forth: being the youngest child out of four brothers; having been sexually abused by the eldest brother; the urge to be acknowledged as a man by the father, who had always been indifferent to his need (unlike the mother, who considered him her private

and selected object). João feels that he is noticed by his father only when the latter gives him an imperative order which will accompany him for the rest of his life: "You must be like your father and your brothers to honor your family".

Thrown into the sexual enigma, inhabited by doubt, paralyzed in the act of building a satisfactory identity, João both refuses and accepts to be a mirror to the father; that is, when the father looks at him, he'll see his own image reflected.

Since he can't be the object of his father's look, he now wants to be the look itself, watching the world through his father's eyes.

Disconnected from his potential, deviated from his individuation, João alienates himself from his own wish and aims at wishing what his father wishes. After all, the honor of the family is at stake.

In this setting marked by the absence of Eros, Thanatos emerges and establishes its game of repetitions.

The ultimate moment for the breaking-up with the girlfriend is when she calls on him at his office. Surprised with her presence, he doesn't conceal his irritation and attacks her verbally, censuring her initiative.

Accepting the presence of the girlfriend in the place where he works requires a flexibility of conscience that João doesn't possess yet, since, for him, Eros and Logos, respectively symbolized by the girlfriend and by his work, are gods that cannot partake in the same altar. They are dimensions that should be distinctly kept apart to avoid the risk of confusing the identities.

The office is this sacred temple, a place where the imaginary identification with the father figure takes place, a space which serves as a

foundation for the construction of a certain kind of meaning to which João clings to, as if this were the only one possible.

With this report, some questions come to mind: who is the subject of this discourse? What kind of masculinity does he reveal?

How can Archetypal Psychology help us answer such questions?

Jung, in his book *Psychological Types*, recognizes his psychology as a third place between the perspectives of the body and of the mind. He affirms that his psychology is based on the soul, adopts the perspective of the soul; that is, it's an *esse in anima*, a state of being in the soul.

Free from the attempts of imprisonment by the methods of the natural science, the metaphysics, the psychologies of perception and of the biochemical bases, the soul relies on the imagination and reveals what James Hillman called "the poetic base of the mind".

Privileging the soul means returning to the images, since this is the way the psyche reveals itself spontaneously.

Images are the basic data of psychic life, the privileged doorway to the knowledge of the soul. Nothing is more basic in the soul than the images.

Images are the psyche in its imaginative visibility, as Jung teaches us when he states that "all psychic process is an image and an act of imagining".

James Hillman advocates a Psychology of the Soul and an Imaginal Psychology. He decomposes the word "psychology" into the "logos of the psyche" in order to rename it as stories or discourses of the soul through images. Thus, Psychology becomes the ability to listen to what the images are telling us.

The images, says Hillman, are autonomous, spontaneous and inventive, and are always organized according to a given archetypal fantasy.

We tend to consider the concept of archetypes as fundamental structures of the imagination which, with its varied perspectives, influence not only the way we think and perceive the world but also our fantasies, our ways of speaking, our ideas and metaphors.

Therefore, archetypes are present not only in the content of our discourses but also in the form these discourses are revealed. There are no frontiers between what and how we say something.

If archetypal language is the metaphorical discourse of the myths, we can state that there is a god in every discourse; that is, there is always a god that guides the narrative, shaping and forming the words according to specific characteristics. Whether or not invoked, the gods are always present. They inhabit our subjectivity and govern our deeds.

"The Gods are in one's heart", in our every gesture, feeling and thought.

Archetypal Psychology preaches the existence of a god in every perspective, in every embraced attitude. We are always involved in an archetypal perspective, in a mythical fiction.

It's important to emphasize that the objective is not to try to establish a mythical typology, for this would mean having a literal understanding of mythology.

We aim at the possibility of an imaginative rapport with the gods: we should both imagine them and be imagined by them, since it is only in the metaphorical sphere that we find the true value of myths for psychic life.

The archetypes and the gods are, therefore, regarded as fictional structures; they are diverse and multiple ways of styles of conscience with its respective rhetoric.

Rhetoric means the power of persuasion, the art of persuasion.

The rhetoric of the archetype is the way each god persuades us to believe in the myth in which we are entangled.

Every god possesses its own rhetoric: the way to convince ourselves of what we are, the way through which we refer to ourselves, which serves as a basis for the fiction that sustains us.

Hillman postulates that rhetoric is not simply the art or the system of persuasive speech: to him, every discourse is rhetorical because every archetype has its own rhetorical characteristic, its own way of persuasion.

There's no way to dissociate the god from his or her rhetoric. One way of cultivating the soul, according to Archetypal Psychology, is to provide for the acceptance, the belief and the reception of the rhetoric of fiction.

Going back to João, who is our main concern here, we wonder: which fiction sustains him? Which gods are involved here? Whose rhetoric is João's?

We tend to believe that João's rhetoric reflects and is under the aegis of a type of experience that was associated by the Greeks, at a determined moment, to a power known as Apollo. By resemblance, João's rhetoric is said to be Apollo-like.

Apollo symbolizes, in the Greek imagery, the god of logic and reason.

A lover of beautiful forms, clearness, order and truth, Apollo teaches the value of distance and objectivity in forming a sensible and fair opinion about the world and the things.

He's the principle of conscience, the representative of Logos, the god that stands for the rational form of thinking and, consequently, for the possibility of a civilized life.

However, every god has his or her *infirmity*, and the *infirmity* of this Apollo is the denial of instinct life, a life inexorably related to the feminine design.

Apollo offers a model of the masculine that presents extreme difficulty in relating to the erotic and feminine aspects of the psyche.

Identified with the patriarchal order, of which he is considered the most legitimate representative, Apollo is a style of conscience that presents extreme difficulty in welcoming the *anima*, the feminine principle of the psyche and also the basic metaphor of Psychology.

Citing Hillman:

"Apollo certainly introduces a disastrous pattern, destructible to the psychological life, aloof from anything that has to do with the feminine ways, be it Cassandra, Dafne or Coronis (whoever he touches will end up in trouble). On that account, you end up with the feeling that Apollo does not belong to the sphere of the psyche."

Observing João's progression we notice how much Apollo accompanies him: the obsessive demand of ordering he imposes on himself so he can be in the world, the stern identification with the masculine pattern offered by the father, the difficulty in eroticizing his relationships with women. If

Apollo is the god of moderation and dispassionateness, and if one of his mottos is "nothing in excess", João is undoubtedly one of his greatest admirers.

João, as a prisoner of Logos, refuses to experience the *anima*, to delve deeply into the images, to find out his innermost part and to reflect upon them. In doing so, he nullifies an imaginative and poetic possibility.

However, as Nietzsche teaches us, there's no Apollo without a Dionysius; and João dreams. João reports the following dream:

He is on a square, with several other men. All of them, including João, are wearing the company uniform. As he looks ahead, he realizes they are watching a Caetano Veloso* show. On stage, in colorful and puffed out clothes, Caetano performs with an orchestra of women.

Suddenly, Caetano interrupts the show and invites João to go up stage. There was a condition, however: he had to take off the uniform and, naked, go up stage. João is startled with the request, moved and so he wakes up.

João reports the dream in an uncomfortable and anguished way. He is startled with the images and with the invitation. He wonders why he should dream about Caetano Veloso, a person for whom he had no special admiration because of his feminine posture and sexual ambivalence.

João wonders why he has dreamt about someone he repudiates and who does not deserve his attention, and why he had been forced to be naked in the presence of other men.

We, on the other hand, propose different questions: what do the images propose to João? What is he being invited to? What does Caetano want from João?

João's dream introduces him to a new plot, a new fiction. Another god is crowned. Dionysius is summoned, and Caetano Veloso is his incarnation.

In the Brazilian cultural reality, Caetano, with his gestures, his attitude, his songs, his sexuality and his ethics, takes over the position destined to the god Dionysius. Caetano is our Dionysius.

But who is this god? Dionysius is fundamentally a mundane god, assertive of the positive values of earthly life.

*Caetano Veloso is one of the most famous singers and composers of the Brazilian Popular Music. His work has a distinguished position in Brazil for its artistic style: radical, transgressive, innovative, restless. Caetano is the voice of the unexpected and of the non-consensual that surprises us with poetry.

He is the god of the exaltation of happiness, pleasure, wine, love and excessive exuberance, bound for freedom-oriented laughter and for the communion with the wild nature. Dionysius is the god of whom the philosopher Nietzsche admitted being a disciple, in his famous sentence: "I'd rather be a satyr than a saint". This is the one to be privileged, not the Dionysius related to other cults that preach the immortality of the soul,

emphasizing the renunciation of the world and the adoration of an ascetic ideal.

Dionysius is the god of the multiple faces, the masked god that invites men to the challenge of seeing him beneath the mask or, who knows, from the mask.

Dionysius is the god who should teach men "to see what should be seen"; that is, "to see what is most evident beneath the disguise of the most invisible", according to what Euripides shows us in the play *The Bacchante*.

However, what can be most evident and, at the same, time most invisible than the eternal and ceaseless transformations of the world, dionysian power that subverts all logical categories related to the identity and to the essence?

As J.P. Vernant says:

"An overcoming of all forms, a game of appearance, a confusion between the illusory and the real: the sovereignty of god Dionysius depends on the fact that, with his epiphany, all emphasized categories, all evident oppositions which give coherence to our perception of the world, instead of remaining distinct and exclusive, approach one another and merge, becoming mingled".

Thus, Dionysius fulfills his function of *pharmakon*, as described by Plato in *The Pharmacy*, or of insoluble, as J. Derrida reveals to us. Dionysius cancels the categories that impose a dichotomy, not belonging to one specific meaning but moving among them.

If Apollo is the principle of identity, Dionysius is the god of difference which, shuffling the codes, breaking down the appearances, promotes the communication of the antagonistic categories, confusing and subverting them while closed sets

A game of presence and absence, the deity is always in movement, a form in everlasting change. In his epiphany, multiple and incessant, he shows himself as both masculine and feminine, young and old, distant and close.

If we shift to the analytical environment, we'll see that João is the one unable to see the god through his masks; that is, he is unable "to see what should be seen".

Unable to perceive the ephemeral nature, the transience and the impermanence of things, João sets to worship their apparent permanence.

Paralyzed, João tends to immortalize what had been contingent and fortuitous, therefore enslaving himself to the identity of the things, refusing to take part in the inexhaustible game of potentiality.

Held captive of identifications, João can't partake of the dionysian wine to venture the possibility of creating new fictions, to attempt the invention of other rhetoric, multiple subjectivity, and, who knows, the construction of other forms of experiencing the masculine.

It's worth mentioning that one of the epithets of Dionysius is Lysius, the one that sets free. Lysius means to loosen, to release, to dilute the ropes that form the ego and its identifications so that the god of metamorphoses may lodge himself and pretend to bring forth, around and inside of us, the multiple figures of the other or, according to Artaud: the innumerable states of being.

So, this is Dionysius. God principle that brings out the difference in order to subvert all possible forms.

Dionysius teaches us to realize that the most foreign part in ourselves should be heard, taken into consideration and regarded as something close and even familiar to us.

We must accept this foreigner/other that visits us as part of ourselves.

We should accept the difference and be responsible for it. Responsibility should be a choice to whomever, beyond good or bad, beyond all Apollo-like moral ideals, beyond all conventions and conveniences, agrees to answer to what concerns him, to what constitutes him; accepts to obey the designs of the god.

I believe this is the direction indicated by the invitation made by Caetano Veloso to João in his dream. Although João denies it, the image "Caetano Veloso" is not totally external in relation to him. "Caetano" is a psychic possibility and it now demands João's attention. The invitation requests that he leave the space of the uniformity of men (the unvarying men) to be able to single himself out, to individuate, to move from the audience to the stage, the setting to witness the construction of an affirmative hymn in relation to his own life.

It's imperative that he take off the uniforms, old habits and attitudes that sentence him to be a type of man which he himself, however shyly, starts to question. The masculine motif shifts from the monotheistic domain and is cast to the rich and multiple soil of polytheism. Nudity is essential so that new puffed out and colorful choices may come to dress a body that intends to be a field of possibilities.

Due to neurotic strictness, Caetano/Dionysius introduces to us the laws of casualty, possibility and multiplicity. He invites us to dance to the inexhaustible movement of the world as it creates differences.

Like the god himself, who is nomadic and not familiar with any established residence, we are invited to be the eternal builder and destroyer, to reinvent ourselves each moment.

Nourished by what Nietzsche named *amor fati*, which means saying yes to everything that happens to you, a movement of exaltation to life with all its good and bad, with the perfect and the imperfect, with joy and pain, we (as well as João) join the game of ceaseless mutation to become worthy of living the joy of everyday life.

Wishing to celebrate like the bacchante chorus: Whoever, in everyday life, enjoys the happiness of life, this I proclaim happy like the gods.

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