

AngelWitch: A Dichotomy - Outreach Journal

AngelWitch: Name of a bar.

Dichotomy: "a separation into two divisions that differ widely from, or contradict each other."

Angelwitch is crowded tonight; Very crowded. The more crowded it becomes, the more oppressive and uncomfortable I feel. This bar dresses its women in S&M outfits. The ensemble includes a dog collar around the neck and chains which adorn the outfit giving the impression that bondage is more of an accessory than a condition of slavery. The women, as beautiful as they are, remind me of snakes as they slither up and down, in front of the poles. Their faces are hard and I can't tell right away if they are hidden somewhere behind the masks. I catch the eye of one I know, life comes into her face and she smiles. The trance is broken and the rhythm is lost for a second.

One angel doll hangs over the bar. There are at least 10 witches hanging around the bar. A shrine over the entrance has a bottle of milk with a straw; an offering to the spirit of the aborted fetus, "kumon thong." The other shrines over the bar have offerings to a variety of spirits and gods, including "kumon thong," a phallic, and Hindu gods. Beng counts at least 6 deities being worshipped. There is a large portrait of the owners, a foreign man and his Thai wife, under all the shrines. I wonder sarcastically which is the "angel" and which one is the "witch." An older woman comes over to chat. She is a server and "cheers" the customers to take the girls out. Sometimes her behavior indicates that she herself has not lost a sexual drive though she tells us she has been working in the bars for 40 years already. I glance at the inside of her wrist and see the history of pain and loneliness in the scars of self-cutting. I wonder how long ago she did that and if she still feels the pain or if she has just become lost in it all. She is open and friendly, probably not threatened that we could do too much damage here. She walks away to entice another customer and the back of her shirt shows a devil woman with red eyes, long nails and a derogatory crawling position. Is she more "angel" or more "witch?" I wonder if she is still in there somewhere. I wonder if there is still time to reach her.

During bar outreach, I often get relief from the seduction of briefly clad bodies in view, by watching the TV placed strategically above the door. A fighting match is taking place on the screen. Blood is being spilled all over the floor. The men grasp and struggle with no relief. It goes on and on. I find no relief. My choice: violence and blood shed, or sex. I choose sex. The women's bodies are a familiar sight and I can look in their eyes and find humanity when our eyes meet. "A" catches my eye and smiles at me. There is something safe in knowing her and her knowing me. It doesn't take long to feel close to the women. Relationship happens fast in the bars. The women cling to the hope they find in our presence. Last visit one of the older servers, in her 60's came and sat down beneath me and leaned into me with her

arms resting over my legs. It was a position that one would imagine in a portrait; of a young girl at her mother's feet, resting securely. Only here she was in her 60's sitting at my feet, resting on me, confiding in me.

The room grows dark and all the women leave the stage. The atmosphere is intense with lustful anticipation. I am finding it harder to breath. The music is familiar. It is the playful Issan music so familiar to them; their heart music. In skimpy clothes, they dance to their heart music. This time they know the moves and the dance comes naturally and gracefully. Their dance, their music, their heart, now used to sell their bodies to men of a different culture. The show turns lewd as the women strip and act out sexual fantasies. We've had enough. We get up and force our way through the crowd of men hypnotized by the act on stage. The older woman hugs us at the door.

We leave and breathe a sigh of relief.

As we walk away from the bar I realize that there is a little "angel" and a little "witch" in all of us. We are no longer slaves to darkness, but we are still in process of being conformed to God's image. The women in the bar, on the other hand are still in bondage and being pulled further away from integration into disassociation. Are they "angel" or "witch?" Good or bad? Angels in witches' clothing? Witches behind angels' faces? Madonnas or whores? Who are they? After a while they forget the distinction and they take on the identity that comes with the chains: "Angelwitch."

Angelwitch: a dichotomy where women's souls are divided into two widely different personalities that contradict each other.

Satan is at work using that which God created as good for evil.

NightLight: a dichotomy where the light confronts the darkness and divides it to light a path for the women out of bondage and into freedom and integration.

God is at work, taking that created as good but misused by Satan for evil and redeeming it as good again.

That's why we go to them. And, that is why they come to us.

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