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Portrait of the Invisible Woman in Front of Her Mirror

Anne Archet

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As a child, I dreamed of being the Invisible Woman. I told myself that invisibility would be the only wish that I'd ever be making if one day I would get a rub of the magic lamp. No need to get dressed in the morning to go to school – no need to even go to school! – no need to go to the hairdresser, to be clean and cute, to please and be polite... Sitting at my desk in the classroom, I told myself that as Invisible Woman I'd be profiting to the maximum from my gift, to satisfy all my desires. I fantasied about serving myself with impunity from the candy shelves at the grocery store, going to see all the films at the movie theater and visit all those mysterious places forbidden to little girls, like my mom's room or the boys dressing rooms.

Growing up, I realized the hard way that not only does invisibility not exist, but to be visible is a curse. Being seen, named, it is to have your life stolen.

First, I had been constrained to be a "girl", this inferior and weak being that has the right to only exist in relation with

others, that must seduce at all costs and take care of everybody while continuously smiling, that must be *proper*, not saying dirty words, not getting her dress dirty, being perfect in all aspects while above all not being too clever, because nobody likes a girl who is too cunning.

Then, I learned with stupefaction that I was "Chinese", an object of curiosity, exoticism or mistrust, that is asked continuously where she is from, if she likes eating cats, if she has a bad eyesight because of her funny slanting eyes, if she knows how to say dirty words in "Chinese", when one does not pull her ponytail, or not approach her only to disown her afterwards, so to detect an eventual smoke plume of foulness or *chow mein*; if not to be considered, straightforwardly, as an incarnation of the Yellow Menace that threatens the survival of the White and Christian nation.

Later I became, to my great despair, a "lesbo", a "pussy-licker", an object of sexual fantasy within the scope where such a condition serves to excite the carrier of the phallus (since every lesbian is so only because she was misfucked and really wishes secretly to experience the true ecstasy that a dick may provide), when she is not a perverted being who threatens the very foundations of the family and civilization with her vice. When, later, I was seen in the arms of a man, I immediately switched to another camp, that of the undecided "bi", flighty, unattached, couple-breakers, HIV propagators, unable to admit their homosexuality therefore strictly unworthy of any trust.

All this is only a prelude to what was waiting for me when the time came to ensure my survival. I first became a "human resource", a despicable being, by definition unproductive and selfish for they demand to be paid sufficiently as to be able to survive, a being who's continuously suspected to be a shoplifter, fraud, that we can downgrade to the rank of subhuman by dictating how she should be busying herself, selecting who she'd have the right to be with, and by demanding

obedience and marks of servility in regards to her superiors and clients.

In a clumsy attempt at escaping the hell of Work, I quickly ended up as a "whore" and a "pornographer", so to say, either a threat to public health, order and manners, or a victim (often too alienated and idiotic to be aware of it) of patriarchy and the centuries-old male oppression, who purportedly maintains the system's exploitation by refusing to be a nice victim and letting herself be saved by the great charitable souls who know better than herself what is good for her.

At last, I ended up learning with stupefaction that I was an "intellectual", which, in the corner of the planet where I'm living, means that I am a contemptible being who has lost contact with reality and whose parasitic activities are a pest to the competition and prosperity of the nation.

This is why I have become "anarchist", in a more or less conscious effort to throw back to the face of those who were looking at me an image that is was more fitting to what I considered to be the real me. To my damning; for as "anarchist", I thus became a terrorist, an apostle of violence, a window breaker, doubled with a bomber, all the while being a pathetic and naive dreamer, unaware of historical laws, some immature and not at all serious rebel - if not some ignoramus of limited intellectual capacities who will never change anything to society and only harm public debate.

At that point, I had no other choice than to yell "fuck that" and turn back to my childhood dream by becoming "Anabraxas", the invisible man/woman.¹

¹ The entity was originally named in this text as its author, Anne Archet, who is not me, the translator, but given that her amazing works are all in (Quebecquer) French, I thought it to be more proper to a more global, non-French readership to use my nickname "Anabraxas", for I also identify with most of the context and reasons that led her to take a facetious identity. She fully consented to this name change.

Never will you see Anabraxas on the telly. Never will you hear her voice on the radio. That's because she is neither on civil registers, nor at the revenue service, nor on electoral lists, as her name isn't engraved either on some plastic ID card, or on a tombstone. Anabraxas is no-one to the eyes of the Leviathan. It is a child dead at birth, the bride of the unknown soldier, a spectre, an empty shell, a jacket with holes which lets the air penetrate. If the one who's hidden behind Anabraxas is so mysterious, if she insists on remaining invisible and out of reach, it is because that is the price to pay to remain at a good distance from the flesh-shredding cogs and wheels of society.

Anabraxas focuses on one sole task: to create my life and build my relation with the world and others accordingly with my own terms – in other words, to reappropriate my existence here and now, to the extent of my own capacities. Anabraxas is a tool allowing me to challenge all the identities they are attempting to enforce upon me since I was born. I have only one cause: my own. Evidently, I wish with all my heart that anyone does the same, for when individuals are revolting and uprising against their own oppression, the produce of it is called "insurrection".

If Anabraxas is invisible, it is because I have made the tactic of insurrection mine, that is one of vanishing. **Insurrection is the liberation of a space, a time, by individuals refusing their exploitation, their servitude and the institutions that exert it.** It can strategically take several forms, such as the temporary autonomous zone, nomadism, the lines of evasion. It can be tiny or large scale, last only a few minutes or an entire life. **It is both the blow struck against the institutions and the direct experimentation of a life as it should be lived, so to say, without constraints and without hinders.**

Insurrection is the opposite of sacrifice and morality. The insurgent does not act for *the common good*, for *the liberation of all*, for *the building of a better world*, but to give ourselves

the means to go from survival to life, to taste, be it only for a few seconds, what it is to truly be alive before being thrown into the cold hands of death. **The time and space of insurrection is lived like a sexual intercourse - no exchange, only giving; a temporary association to collaborate towards a common and precise goal;** no purpose, no meaning in the activity other than the pleasure taken from taking part in it; the construction of desire and the realization of ourselves through the *egoist lust for the other*. And it is through the multiplication and accumulation of the insurrectionary experiences that devices of power will be eventually brought down.

Insurrection eludes public space, the places of mediation and reification, the spaces conceded to liberty by power. The individual taking part in it takes on the devices of power, lives, lusts, then returns to the invisible. In a society striving to *expose everything*, where being seen equates with being recognized, integrated and controlled, where the summit of social success is stardom – which means, continuous mediation, without any other object than the transformation of the individual into merchandise – there is no escape other than illusion, vanishing into invisibility.

Until the time when, finally, it is possible to be living, wholesome and free, in broad daylight.