

Scheherezade Goes West

a performance by Fawzia Afzal-Khan

Introduction

Charles Duncombe, on staging Heiner Müller's *Medeatext: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* in 2000, writes:

What we sought to convey in this production was that in our own time, the global market—first, second and third world alike—is the prize for those who reside in the glittering glass towers of the corporate adventurers. In our case, however, our indifference is the tool, [as Medea in the ancient myth is the tool of betrayal of the colonized Colchis who is used by the conquering Jason and then cast aside] and it is we ourselves who stand to be used up and cast aside. Los Angeles—and the media machine it contains as the most dominant element of its landscape—has exerted a peculiarly forceful colonization of the global imagination, so powerful in fact that it has begun to displace reality itself. (2003:115)

The production ended, according to Duncombe, with the appearance onstage of the entire “female cast [which replaces the men, who are no longer capable of upright motion], nude, wrapped head-to-toe in plastic, like pieces of meat, who recited a fragmentary choral testimony to the commodification of culture and the pornography of the commercial imagination” (116). Duncombe suggests, then, that what he sees in Müller's work is:

a theatre of global politics, one that expresses the cross-cultural struggle to grapple with sweeping new economic realities, emerging technologies of incredible power, disrupted societies, fractured traditions, decaying political structures, and value systems that after centuries of acceptance are increasingly called into question. (112)

When I first began working on some of Müller's texts as an actor with a company I helped to found back in the mid-1990s, Compagnie Faim de Siecle, I struggled with the questions implicit in Duncombe's valorization of Müller: Does Müller's work qualify as feminist, anticolonial, antiglobalization/transnational theatre? How has Müller's work affected me, a Muslim woman, performing theorist of Pakistani alternative theatre praxis, and now a performer/observer of South Asian/Muslim diasporic theatre work in some of the centers

of the new imperium (New York and Paris) where the *Compagnie Faim de Siecle* resides? How does my position as insider/outsider/woman/Muslim in both first- and third-world contexts inflect my views of feminist transnational coalition possibilities of theory and praxis between these two contexts that could challenge the global status quo, particularly in the case of women, their labor, and representation?

These were the questions that took on added poignancy for me after 9/11, and it was with a sense of urgency in addressing these issues that I sat down to pen my first attempt at playwriting, resulting in the script that follows this introduction.

As far as my relationship with Müller, it is a fairly recent one, dating to my work with the *Compagnie Faim de Siecle*, which began in 1997 with a small production of *Medeamaterial* at the New York Fringe Festival, in which I played the role of one of several Medeas in a production by the Pakistani-born director, Ibrahim Quraishi—documented at length elsewhere (1999). Right away, I was alerted to the radical possibilities for change that can emerge if we really engage seriously with a vision of where our world is headed. However, as my experience with the other Medeas in the cast showed me, having a multicultural, multiracial cast of strong female performers did not adequately address the problems of inherent inequities that exist across the racial and class boundaries within which gendered identities are located and operate. For example: the white Medea remained central to the textual version—she spoke, the rest of us were silent songstresses; the black Medea tried to reverse her marginality by aggressively entering the speaking moments with her funky screeching, much to the dismay of the white Medea; and I, in my role/location as the South Asian more elitely positioned (due to having a “real” job as an academic and a professional husband who also supported me) occupied an exotic register unavailable to the other women but totally in keeping with status quo images of sultry Indian Bollywood actresses.

The power dynamic between West/East, black/white/brown women, while certainly very engaged and engaging in this production, didn’t, in my opinion, alter the politics of representation. And while Ibrahim’s desire to work with Müller’s texts is grounded in his vision of challenging the West’s dominant paradigms of power through an engagement with its own writerly texts—Müller’s being after all, Western texts, with an added level of challenge coming from the fact that Müller’s “high art” “cerebral” texts were being staged by a man from the peripheries, something Müller tried to encourage in his own lifetime—it is still far from clear that this “other” engagement with Müller goes far enough in the direction of challenging the globalization-from-above paradigm.

In other words, the traffic-flow here, to put it mildly, is still about Western intellectual and material life experiences dominating and dictating much of what passes even as avantgarde, status quo—challenging, multicultural artistic work—although obviously this type of work does open up possibilities for such challenging to occur in ways that commercial mainstream theatre work can never do. Yet, it is instructive to note the difficulty Europe’s/the West’s “others” encounter in trying to produce work like Müller’s, which is considered the prerogative of high-minded Western intellectuals by many within even the liberal, left-leaning/avantgarde circles of theatre praxis.

Thus it is that our company’s projects often fail to win grants from the Rockefeller or Ford foundations or the prestigious Arts International, who often give the official reason that “your work is too political”—and frequently, what is perhaps a more insidiously liberal humanistic reason that is surmisable in such responses as, “Why are you doing Müller? Why not develop a more

authentic aesthetic??” (my emphasis). For instance, I was told by a theatre director who read my play with some interest recently, that “it lacked specificity”—and I was asked to make it more “grounded” in a “concrete space/time,” perhaps, he gently suggested, something reflecting an “authentic” Pakistani Muslim woman’s growing-up experience! This fairly typical response encodes precisely the recuperable notion of the “margin” at the center of the liberal humanism that my postcolonial project seeks to displace, or rather, disperse. For, as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks so perspicaciously underlines:

the energy [of postcolonial studies] arises from its indeterminate location and failure to recoup the margin [...]. Postcolonial studies is concerned more with the analysis of the lived condition of unequal power sharing globally and the self-authorization of cultural, economic and militaristic hegemony than with a particular historical phenomenon such as colonialism [...]. It is this free-form aspect of postcolonial studies that makes it the target of both the Right and the so-called Left, but perhaps it is this shapelessness, this refusal to stay still, to define itself [...] that makes postcolonial studies a particularly hospitable interstice from which to work out the paradoxes of history (the temporality of modernity) and colony (imperialism and nationalism). (Seshadri-Crooks 2000:18–19)

The paradoxes of history and colony, within which imperialist and nationalist ideologies frame the unresolved contradiction that is Woman, and which these ideologies thus constantly try to “tame” either by marginalization or recuperation within the center—this contradictory space of Woman must, for my project, remain an irrecuperable one within the reigning discourses of our times, a visible marker of the very untenability of the concept of margin, of “other.”

Thinking some more about Müller’s textual constructions, I realized that, structurally, they could and did provide a model that I might profitably adapt to dramatize a postcolonial project that is both self-critical and oppositional, one that connects seemingly disparate realities of first/third, us/them, Judeo-Christian/Muslim worlds, a project that has become crucially reinvigorated following 9/11. So, I wrote my own version of *Medeamaterial* and called it *Scheherezade Goes West* (Mernissi 2000), a title suggested to me by a book I happened to be reading around the time of 9/11.

The writer, a feminist Islamic theologian, Fatema Mernissi, pens a marvelous account of the strength and courage of the fabled Scheherezade, a woman whose *mission civilisatrice* helped tame the most murderous of men, a woman of the past who stands as a symbol of a humanizing (not to be confused with liberal humanist) feminism from which both West and East today can learn something. Just as Mernissi’s account of Scheherezade is meant to highlight what the West of today can learn from this woman of the Islamic East, so too my Scheherezade (who is also Medea of the East) makes a journey Westward. But unlike the journey of Müller’s Medea, this journey is not just from within a discrete culture, not just an “auto” but an “other” critique, self-critical, yes, but also oppositional—for the “barbarians” have now, arrived at the gates; “them” and “us” finally (as they always did) inhabit a coeval temporality.

It is the post-9/11 world, after all! But the question that I really wanted the text to ask was: Who, precisely, are the barbarians? And why have they arrived at the shores of civilization? Whose civilization? One of the most ironic answers that my text provides to this constellation of questions is that Müller has

transformed into Mullah—a conceit Müller himself might have appreciated! Mad Medea—my Sufi Muslim version of Medea (that is to say, a Medea who is a mystic, a dancer at shrines of local Muslim saints whose devotional cults are frowned upon as un-Islamic by the orthodox elite) hails from Lahore. “Whose whore are you, La-(w)hore,” is a question asked of her repeatedly by a chorus that is at times a gathering of macho male students of the British colonial-era elite Government College (another coeval space/time), at other times a naive (or perhaps not so naive) worker employed by a transnational NGO (non-governmental organization). Many of these organizations have sprung up all over the so-called third world as supposed benefactors of the public in the absence of responsible state actors. The irony here is that their funding sources are generally agencies like the IMF and the World Bank, the movers and shakers of Capital and dreaded enforcers of Structural Adjustment Programs, which render the poor and disenfranchised more impotent and debt-ridden than ever before. The NGO worker, a character who undergoes several guises in the course of the play, is a believer (so it would appear) in transnational agencies’ ability to empower working-class “turd” world women!

But Madmedea, an avatar of the fabled Scheherezade of the *Arabian Nights*, herself implicated within the class system of this patriarchal world we inhabit, is, nevertheless, not one to be fooled by such “new” seductions and seducers. She has seen it all before, and in turn, implicates her many seducers as sources fueling, propelling her desire for vengeance.

MADMEDEA: Müller (Mullah) made me the
vehicle of vengeance.

When the first dramatic reading of my play was performed by some members of Compagnie Faim de Siecle in the fall of 2002 at the Asian American Writers’ Workshop in Manhattan, Müller/Mullah was substituted with “Mohammed” and we chose to have a male speaker split the role of Medea with two women: myself covered in a chador and reciting some of the text in Urdu translation; and Vero, my French counterpart, emerging naked from a tubular cloth sculpture. Thus, Ibrahim in Palestinian kafiyyeh kept shouting lines the audience recognized as part of our post 9/11 discursive habitat, trying to (unsuccessfully) drown out me and Vero (naked French counterpart to Muslim Woman):

the barbarians are at the gates
passengers traveling to Jenin please report to
Gate 911.

The play ends inconclusively with Medea transforming into Scheherezade and accepting/rejecting her whoredom/privilege in a global economy ruled by a coterie of transnational fundamentalists:

MADMEDEA/SCHEHEREZADE: I am his whore and Jason’s too
La(w)hore
Scheherezade come to Colchis, to London, to New York
Maid, where is he, my husband, my creator...

LATINA MAID: At the table of Mullahs
Bush-y beards, Ashcroft screaming cover
that slut
chadors, suits, boots and

all
 debating the fate of Scheherezade
 who sits alone
 framed
 in the corner
 on a ripped-up bed
 her sister's silence
 damning her to whoredom
 in the factory of slaves

So, to re-site my questions/concerns: Who am I? Where am I? What could constitute an effective interruptive feminist performance to halt, reverse, and challenge the imperialist/patriarchal performances of globalized power and dominance in their postmodern capitalist permutations masquerading as a New World Order? In my performative identity as Muslim/South Asian/Other/Woman, how far can I really go (am permitted to go?) to jam the machinery, to interrupt business-as-usual? I conclude with my script's cautionary tale, for, being Müller's faithful maid Medea, like him, I must perform my mea culpa in this transnational game we play, unspeaking, unspeakable.

References

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Scheherezade Goes West

A "synthetic fragment" of *Scheherezade Goes West* was performed in October 2002 by members of the *Compagnie Faim de Siede* at the Asian American Writers' Workshop in New York City, with the title, "Go West!" I encourage people who are interested in performing/producing my script to contact me at <khanf@mail.montclair.edu>.

Characters

MADEEHA/MADMEDEA: two convent-going Lahori girls
 FARYAL/FARIEL: aged six years and upwards
 The MU-LLAH: a generic teacher of sacred texts, a ho(ly)llow man
 MADMEDEA/MADEEHA/FARYAL and SCHEHEREZADE: sufi dervish
 wo-man who dances on the tomb of Madho Lal
 HUSSAIN: male mystic lover of little boys
 CHORUS: mommies and daddies playwrights and painters husbands and
 wives brothersisterschildrendykes studentsinners NGOs all a LOVely mother-
 fucking mosaic

This is a contemporary landscape connecting the dots of Lahore to London, Baghdad to Brooklyn, Müller to Mullah, maquiladora workers to Manakamana's sanyasi yogis, Scheherezade of the Arabian Nights to Susan Sarandon and Shabana Azmi of B(h)ollywood Days. There are no escape routes in a playscape that unfolds in three movements. It can be performed anywhere, anytime, its proper home the creative/destructive discontent sometimes referred to as Globalization, or the New Wor(l)d Order.

*Part I**MedeaMad(e)Mullah: The Re-turn*

Chorus Song: Medea made Müller
 The mullah's maid is Medea
 his whore, La (w)hore
 city of mad medeas
 and sufi dancers
 Ma-dee-ha!!!

Song: "Medea! Wo mera bhai" (oh my dear brother whom I betrayed) Jason! (Urdu-English mixed)

SCENE I

MADMEDEA: What ho! Luscious Lucius!
 Who goest there in the dark of the night
 in the dark of the Light
 (*Sings*) Who is my brother, sister
 who whohoo hoo allah hoo will save me

Jason! Wo mera bhai
 oh my dear bhai
 who I betrayed for you, Jason.

Ja-y-son
 Ya-y-son
 Ya-a-sin (*whirls madly, collapsing*)
 (*In front of a cream-colored settee and mahogany-colored Queen Anne coffee table, a pea-green metal Alladin kerosene heater. Late afternoon on a Lahori winter Sunday, but it could easily be in Baghdad 1500 or in a London bedsitter in the 1900s, cold and damp.*)

MULLAH: Sura Ya-sin. Alif-lam-mim
 recite my daughter Da-Ugh-Terrror reciterecite in the name of the Lord



FARYAL: Who giveth us this day our daily bread
 Hallowed be thy name thy kingdom
 COME

MULLAH: Be-ti! (*the sherif don't like it, rock the casbah, rock the casbah!*
MADMEDEA writhes on the floor)
 Yeh-kyia kar rahi ho? recite the holy Quranic verses
 re-site the sacred Arabic words
 never mind that you don't understand
 keep reciting and fear god's repriMAND
 S()it sit next to me, closercloser
 I will show you the TRUTH
 it grows big and strong
 alwwways ERECT against Untruth and imPiety

FARYAL: Your eyes are closed in divine rapture or what I don't know your
 right hand has disappeared
 under the folds of your stiff white kameez following a motion all its own
 jerkingjerking faster and
 faster ohmy maulvi sahib your shalwar is ballooning upward I stop my
 recitation to observe with dread
 fascination of the abomination...

1. Members of *Compagnie Faim de Siecle* (Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Veronique Ruggia, and Ibrahim Quraishi) in *Go West!* (2002), an adaptation of *Scheherzade Goes West*, by Fawzia Afzal-Khan, with texts by Pierre Corneille and Heiner Müller, directed by Ibrahim Quraishi and Veronique Ruggia at the *Asian American Writers' Workshop*, New York. (Photo by Ron Kiley)

MULLAH: (*Screaming*) Don't stop don't stop don't in Allah's name don't stop

FARYAL: Oh god help me now trouble is here in this room I smell it sweat
on his face so red the color of
blood

Ya Ali I must escape run upstairs and bolt the door singing rock the casbah
rock the casbah

MADMEDEA: (*Screams jumps up and twirls in wild abandon*) Ya Ali! Ya Ali
Not of mullah nor of qazi nor my husband shall I sing

I shall sing to appease MY beloved

Ya Ali ya Fatima, ya Aliya Fatima ya Aliya Fatima
neither married nor single like a *Vi-I-ir-gin* oh madonna

I will nurse

a babe in my arms

(*Mommy daddy return to the Scene of Original Sin and go: tsk! Tsk!*)

(*Shameshame poppyshame whata shame shame*)

(*The Mullah is Banished. For Now.*)

SCENE 2

(*Bedroom Scene in MADEEHA's first husband's house; FARYAL and she are quite
grown up now.*)

HUSBAND #1: Bloody bitch on wheels screaming virago cuntface
screwing machine take this thwack
thwack thwack

MADEEHA: Behen chod, choothiasisterfucker I am Madeeha don't mess
with me

MY BITE IS WORSE THAN MY BARF

(*Spitting venom in his face*) I'll scratch up that prettyboy face of yours
jesus christ my ass HOW YOU HAVE FOOLED THEM

and don't forget my

sisterfriendsexysoulmate FARYAL

she's good in a catfight you'd like that wouldn't you cackle cackle chortle

(*THWACK THWACK THWACK THWACK THWACK THWACK.*)

(*Sounds of a slapping tussle— who is slapping whom?*)

(*In the Government College Compound the next day, 110 degrees Fahrenheit*)

CHORUS OF GOVERNMENT COLLEGE STUDENTS: The clock is
ticking

time's a-passing

Mack the Knife is back in town

singing in the sweat

allah-hoo hooallahahoo

Mad-dy Maddy Quite Coly

why won't your marriage work

Maddymaddy Quite Cunt-rightly

you've made your bed of thorns

Now lay in it BITCH

(*Enter FARYAL followed by Basra the Beard, a not-quite mullah devouring her with
his BIGBIG eyes; a typical B(h)ollywood scene*)

BASRA: There you stand on those steps
on a hot summer day

the Loo of Lahore makes my dream come true. Ghalib's saqi is my muse too
 with a toss of your hair
 and a swing of your hips
 you hiss stomping off
 FARYAL: What's the matter with you has the cat got your tongue?

(Note: "loo" is the hot wind that scorches one during the 110-degree FH temperatures of Lahori summers.)

BASRA: I wish the earth would
 swallow me (w)Hole
 chadorbeardpassionall

FARYAL: arreyyaar what is this
 love/shove/ishq/vishq
 get a--hold getagrip
 this love--in--cholera isn't
 ALL

there is

(Strains of "chura lyia hai dil ko jo tum nain" [you who have stolen my heart], from a popular Bollywood musical play in the background)

I'd rather be Ghalib.

and not his damned Saqi writing those ghazals.

yet inspiring those rhymeschemes I don't want to giveup

my power you see

so I'll be my own slave

thank you pretty please

(FARYAL stomps off tossing her head. BASRA watches and waits for the duration of the play, alternately weeping and jerking off, laughing and jerking off, playing the sitar and jerking off, drinking and jerking off, fucking MADEEHA and jerking off. He becomes MADEEHA's second husband as FARYAL disappears to enter a different land(e)scape: London, New York, Berlin cityscapes of the Other)

(Note: Ghalib was a famous 18th-century Indian poet of Urdu verse known for his mastery of the "ghazal" form.)

(Note: Saqi is an Urdu term for pourer of wine, who could serve as an inspirational muse of sorts, a stand-in for the beloved.)

MADEEHA: Eat my cuntlike you did
 in the early dayswhydon'tyou
 sonofabitchwhatsgotten in to you

BASRA: You are a whore not a woman
 eating the entrails of shellfish

you crunch to the marrow then spit out like a peasant aren't you ashamed
 of how FAT you've become eatingdrinking like there's no tomorrow

(As an aside) FARYAL I am COMing to Janat-ul-Amrika whyohwhy did you leave
 me in this refuse heap of La(w)hori history with a madwoman

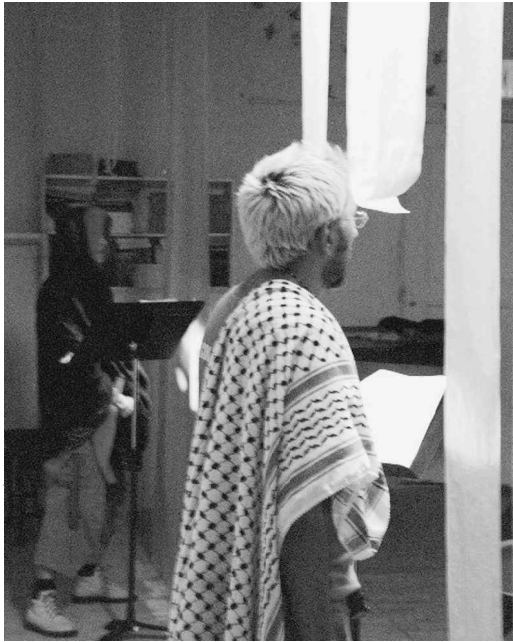
(Note: Janat-ul-Amrika literally means the Paradise that is America!)

Part II

Maid Medea Scheherezade: Eating the Other (yumyum!)

LATINA MAID: Double double
 toil and trouble
 I'll huff and I'll puff
 but won't blow your house down
 you pay me more
 than my factory bosses
 why am I am I still
 sick

FARYAL: I'm going to play Med/e/eh/a
 (As an aside) I miss her so



2. Ibrahim Quraishi in *Goes West!* (2002), an adaptation of *Scheherezade Goes West*, by Fawzia Afzal-Khan, with texts by Pierre Corneille and Heiner Müller, directed by Ibrahim Quraishi and Veronique Ruggia at the Asian American Writers' Workshop, New York. (Photo by Ron Kiley)

(a repetitive musical phrase that whips worshippers into a mystical frenzy)

a service for art look
after
my
babies I hate
waking up to those snores of contentment next to me
transformed
rage at my dePARTure
what do you want Jason, Yay-son, ya-ay-ay son
I've betrayed
before for
you
not again
my sister maid where is she

LATINA MAID: Beneath Scheherezade's marital bed
what a lovely story that is
her sister's maid to the end
that Duniyazad she's
A Vi-ii-ir-gin offering up her
maid(en) head to that tyrant
ShahrYAAR (no yaar he!)

(The sister watches and waits, in silence, praying she won't fall asleep. Vigilance is key if disaster is to be averted.)

BASRA THE BEARD has passed out to one side holding a shriveled penis in his hand while SHAHRYAR performs a dance with his sword circlingcircling the marital bed, which is in the shape of a big red cherry, surrounded by baby prams filled with all manner of exotic fruits; on top of the cherry SCHEHEREZADE is busy donning and removing a variety of masks, each representing mythical figures and types; SHAHRYAR freezes in a grotesque pose as she becomes the Mask of Medea the Maid and starts whirling and twirling madly, chanting sufi verses.)

MA(I)DMEDEA: Ya Ali Ya Fatima! Ya Aliyafatima

My honor decreases not
in telling my story
I will dance to appease
my Beloved
not of husband, nor of father nor my brother shall I think
I will think only to appease
MY beloved

(SHAHRYAR/YA-SON abandons his pose dancing a paroxysm of rage around the marital bed; he raises his sword to avenge his honor.)

MEDEA: (Shrieking) Sister! Sister! Wake up! Save me!

(Sounds of snores from beneath the bed; BASRA THE BEARD recommences masturbating his dick with one hand while shaving off his beard with the other; sounds of bombs falling buildings collapsing projection of people jumping off a tall skyscraper; the sword falls, a female head rolls on to the ground.)

Part III

Who Made Medea?: Is the post in post 9–11 really post?

Re-Citing La W hore

CHORUS: (Whirling dervishes) Whose whore is she allah whowhowho
dhamadham must kalandar who-re

(F)ARIEL/FARYAL: W.H.O. will pay for a sterilization program you people
proliferate like bunnies
do a play Madeeha
go out and preach
population planning
to the huddled masses
make them pray/prey to (allah)WHO,WHOWHO
heeheehee
MAD^AEEHA Native informant
et tu Brutae?!!
Whowhowho is
the betrayer now
I need to eat
and will do your bidding
anon my Maid

(F)ARIEL: Sharon
head of our agency
is not pleased
with your husband's portrayal
of NGO's as helping hands
in the turd world's (oh sorry heehee you know what I mean)
trafficking of women crisis
I mean surely these women
and their families should be grateful
at their return to the
Homeland

MAD-EE-(H)-A: A return is only ever a re-turning
of the screw
tightening tightening
the noose around
their scrawny pathetic
necks
how will they pay back
their accumulated debts

(F)ARIEL: We have loans—

MAD-EE-(H)-A: The moneylenders
the pimps the paterfamilias—

(F)ARIEL: — to help those
who can't help themslaves

MAD-EE(H)-A: —lying in wait
hyenas all
a human fence
ERECT

to prevent unfortunate accidents
that make the patria look bad
WOMAN IMMOLATES HERSELF AFTER HACKING SONS IN
PIECES

(F)ARIEL: what a dreadful headline
what a dreadful country
what barbarism is this

take the loans
and return to your proper homes
la-dies

(Note: Madho Lal is a famous 17th-century dervish/sufi poet of India.)

MADMEDEA: Oiayyyy! *(thrashing her head about hair swinging madly)*

Madho Lal Hussain-a!!! your slave is at your door.
singing who, whooohoo, allah hoo, hoowho
the Mullah's belly is big

let's beat that billy with a stick

(Note: Bill Clinton was a famous cunt-loving U.S. president.)

Billy's BUSH-y beard is long (in the bush, bush, what's he doing with the bush, bush...).

and his sermons are all wrong.

WHY...

(Note: Bush is the current U.S. president and head of the American Taliban movement.)

(F)ARIEL: Shut the fuck up, you've gotten madder than ever

what's this shit about the mullah and Billy Bush

do you want me to lose my well-paying job

cunt that you are

envious of those who got away from

the turds YOU scavenge in

CHORUS OF MOMMIESDADDIES: ESCAPE! ESCAPE! ESCAPE!

(Sounding like sirens) Liberty beckons on the shores of a brave new world.

MADMEDEA: Put my eyes out then

I'll become a sanyasi

singing of my uncle sam

O-Sam-A!! Uncle Sam!

Will you defend me

against that SOB

who fondled my virgin

breasts and squeezed my

ass-a-ma o uncle sam-a

he said Lie

through your tongue reciting

WHO hoo-Allah hoo

baby its okay

he said

you are defending the

integrity of your

Man (ly) Nation hood

not

hoodwinking but

holding ERECT

the Truth of

Justice, Law, and Democracy

That is why

O sister to Scheherezade

its okay to nuke-fry those

damn boys

in Af-ghan-is-tan

and Su-dan

Iraq and I-ran

barbarian chauvinists
 said Billyboy those
 bushy beards
 are not like US
 oh no

MADMONIKA don't
 be disappointed
 he said

(Monica needs no explanations)

I've vindicated your honor see
 by striking
 those afroasian breasts

so different from your soft white ones I am
 a Real Man now not a hilly-billy anymore

are you proud of me

CHORUS (ENSEMBLE): Whose whore are YOU la-whore
 whose whore are you, Lahore

MADMEDEA/SCHEHEREZADE: Müller made me the
 vehicle of vengeance
 barbarian at the gates
 I am his whore and Jason's too La (w)hore
 come to Colchis, to London, to New York
 Maid, where is he, my husband, my creator...

LATINA MAID: At the table of Mullahs
 Bush-y beards, Ashcroft screaming cover
 that slut
 chadors, suits, boots, and
 all

debating the fate of Scheherezade
 who sits alone framed
 in the corner
 on a ripped-up bed
 her sister's silence
 damning her to whoredom
 in the factory of slaves

CHORUS: Allha hoo-who who, allah's who-re

(repeat ad nauseum)

Fawzia Afzal-Khan is Professor of English at Montclair State University, New Jersey. She is author of several articles on Pakistani alternative theatre in TDR, Social Text, STQ, and other scholarly journals. Her book on the subject is forthcoming in 2004 from Seagull Press. Also forthcoming is an edited collection *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out* from Interlink Books. Her published books include *Cultural Imperialism: The Indo-English Novel* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) and *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies* (Duke University Press, 2000). She is a trained Indian classical singer and actor and founding member of *Compagnie Faim de Siecle*.

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