

We Who Are Not As Others

Kazi Khaled Arafat

As a broadminded metal-head, I don't mind quoting on an article exclusively on heavy metal.

We all share the same biology regardless of ideology.

In spite of that, people can become outsiders for the way they think. They can also be rejected for the colour of their skin, for their religion, for even a petty matter like having an incurable disease, even if it's not contagious. In our own country, we've had a revolution because another, alien language was forced upon us. After all, it's human to avoid or even rebel those who don't breathe like you do, don't peel their boiled eggs like you do, like the situation Jonathan Swift described in Gulliver's Travels, maybe that's why headbangers have to wear a crown of thorns in most places they try to be; for in Bangladesh we have achieved the ultimate act of humanity for being human: Shunning those people who don't listen to the some music as you do.

I'll admit, we aren't throwing down from cliffs like the Spartans did to their old people, but we are the ones who are called crazy by (barf) techy, (retch) fans who don't know what metal is about, and our music is called cacophonous by those who listened to it in the 70's, and therefore know what it's about. We are the headbangers, the ones who are not as others. If any of my brother Jerks were wondering where I got the title from, I stole it from Sepultura. I didn't clear it with max, but I don't think he's gonna mind.

Now I've been meaning to write this piece ever since the first time my parents, in the name of autocracy, took away my, battered stereo, and here I have the views of underground and even a retired singer who still breathes metal.

Before I make good my case, however, here's a look into what they think I'm not saying that everyone bangs, an anti-metal crusader feels the same, and I don't want to be misunderstood.

I have been blessed by the most liberal parents in the universe (and maybe even in the neighbourhood !!!). My folks are both pretty democratic. One of the advantages of democracy is freedom of speech and my father exercised his democratic rights in an interview: he sure didn't let his 'humane, one sided love' for me, his only son, hide any hatred towards the vile, contemptible, and evil heavy metal. (Just joking!) He refused twice before giving in to my nagging, saying that he didn't even want to talk about it, so despicable does he consider it, well, my tears are staining the paper now, and, I'll bet, so are yours and even if they're not, which is most probably the case, off with the melodrama and on with the interview !!! (Flourish of trumpets and drums.)

Q) What do you think of your metalhead son's over all attitude?

I was decidedly a good bargain. The painting featured an old man, leaning against a marble pillar. There was a faintest trace of lassitude on the man's face. He wore an elegant silk robe embroidered with gold thread. Clearly — he was man who was used to giving orders, not taking them. The people at the auction house told me it was a portrait of the last 'zameendar' or landlord of Lakshimpur. Anyway — I thought it had a sort of classical touch to it. So I bought the painting and hung it on my bedroom wall. That was the beginning.

As I switched off the light and retired to bed that night, I glanced contently at the painting. It was a bit brighter than I had anticipated. The eyes of the old man shone in the faint rays of street light that seeped through. Looking into those burning eyes I felt it had produced a mesmerizing effect on me and soon I dozed off.

Later that night I woke up on hearing the sounds of footsteps — someone was pacing up and down very impatiently. But that was impossible as I was the only one home at that time. So ignoring the sound I went back to sleep. Many days passed after that particular incident. As my friends came to notice the newest painting on my wall a lot of appreciation began to come my way. I also came to know the man in the picture — had been a notorious figure known for his extortion, injustice, exploitation and various other crimes. He was a well known figure prior to the rule of the British.

By and by — I came to know even more about this man whose name was Chowdhury Shahbaz Khan and the more I learnt the more intrigued I became.

About seven months after I had bought the painting once

A) Arrogant, insolent, dis-bident!

Q) What do you think this is, due to?

A) There are many factors, but the prime factor is his fondness for the grotesque cacophony he calls music. This so-called music has destructive lyrics, preaching hatred, violence, and civil, Sadistic activities which is absolutely detrimental to the mental, psychological, and emotional health of any person, particularly an adolescent. Besides being destructive to the person concerned, (my son in this case), it is also extremely annoying and disgusting at times subjecting those with in hearing range to noise pollution.

Q) Are you referring to heavy metal?

A) Of course.

Q) Have you even impartially listened to or read the lyrics of a metal song?

A) No; however, I had to, at times, surrender to my son's endless pestering and therefore tried to bear with this nuisance.

Q) If you have never really heard the music, how can you condemn it? It takes concentration, not to mention impartiality, to listen to a metal song, in the same way that it takes concentration to listen to and understand a Sarod solo by Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. You never did that to a metal song you never listened impartially. What leads you to your conclusion?

A) The sweet melody originating from the fingertips of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan not only attracts but captivates me and so I concentrate on it. On the contrary, the noise of the so-called heavy metal distracts me and so much that I cannot stay close to it.

Q) How can you account for the fact most metalheads' second love is classical, their first being metal? Doesn't that imply that there must be a similarity between the two (which, of course, there is)?

A) What a mendacious statement!

Of course, this may be considered an extremist's point of view even though it's really just a typical example of how a narrowminded society looks down upon hell rats. I won't deny the fact that there are equally militant rivet-heads among us, but hey, we earthdogs are the ones that would vote for the three weird sisters in Macbeth if we got to judge the Miss World-contest !!!

WHAT WE THINK

A) 'Moshin', 'thrashin', underground band is Thrashold, never lacking in their dedication to headbanging, (though lacking in every thing else). All the members of Thrashold are really cool, especially their skinbasher Sunny and their bad guitarist, Zia, whose thoughts screened out loud are —

Q) Have you even met with any opposition to your group?

What do you think are the reasons behind it?

A) Yeah, we've met opposition all right I think that's because of a very wrong concept of the aged musicians — music is limited to the subcontinent. Their views are limited; I think they should understand that music is universal.

Q) Do you think your efforts in trying to establish thrash in Bangladesh will ever be stifled?

A) Hypothetically, we may fail, but we're never gonna give up. It's a long way to go and anyone can call us dream merchants. We want to take as

country to a recognizable position in the global music scene. You know, Sepultura came from the 3rd World; so, there's success after hardship. We're trying and trying. Maybe someday we will overcome the critics depressing criticisms and will create our own flow of universal music. Maybe we're gonna fail. But as long as someone takes up the flag of heavy metal and remembers our home, our dreams will have been fulfilled.

Q) What are your views on the current music scene in Bangladesh?

A) Everybody's too com-

mercial these days. They should avoid commercialization and realize that music is an ART!!!

Q) The name Thrashold seems to be the embodiment of thrash, thrash, and nothing but thrash. Do you guys listen to anything else?

A) Thrashold is Thrashold cuz we do thrash metal music. However, outside of metal we also love classical, blues, psychedelic music; we also are addicted to all kinds of instrumentals — whether they be of guitars, sitars, flutes, violins. But on stage since we play thrash, the name "Thrashold"

sounds cool.

Q) Do you follow any musicians in particular? If you don't have any outside influences, then who do you especially like or respect?

A) We don't follow anyone. We like and have ours deepest respect for every musician who achieved success in the proper way, i.e. honestly and unbiassedly.

Here're the opinions of Gibran Tanwir. This guy was the main force in DethRow, the underground death-metal band, before the group split up. Most of it's members formed another band named Misanthropy. What he has to say is —

Q) What do you think metal band should do to spread the message and make metal more popular throughout the country?

A) The metal bands in Bangladesh have to do loads of concerts. They have to keep the vibe alive against all odds and let the rest of the pop-hearing whippers know that metal's something you can't kill off, no matter what you do. And as for the thrash bands, they have to do basically the same thing but they gotta have their own sound. I mean, you can't go on playing other people's music for the rest of your lives, so without their own sound, they'd fade away from the scene sooner or later. So get your own music man, never mind the sales figures, just get your music and ideas out and let us metalheads worry about getting the ideas across and making the music a success.

To be continued



Rock Brigade performing live at the Institute of Engineers, January 1992

Quiz Club

Here are this week's ten quizzes crack them send them by Wednesday 5th in June 1996 and win away the Quiz Club Prize

1. The number of Hydrogen atoms present in an ethyne-molecule
2. What are cathode rays.
3. Lyanosis is caused by lack of — in the blood.
4. What is the Capital of Ghana?
5. The state Language of Jordan is —
6. The estimate are of Arctic sea —
7. Who is the writer of the book, Return of the Pharaoh?
8. In the country, how many woman candidates are rainy for the June 12 election?
9. Who is the current Chechen leader?
10. Which country still remain the largest creditor for the last five years?

Answers (24.05.96)

1. Nile
2. Thimpu
3. Integrated Circuit
4. Electric condenser
5. Mitochondria
6. Charles Dicrew
7. 1882
8. Constantinople
9. Aduural Borda
10. Atul Bihari Bajpayee

The Portrait

by Adnan R. Amin



again, one night I was awakened by the sound of footsteps pacing up and down; suddenly a strange fear gripped me. And I felt my whole body trembling. I only looked through the parted doors — and what I saw was enough to leave me paralyzed. Though somehow I knew what I was going to see, the actual sight of Shahbaz Khan pacing on my veranda engulfed me in paralyzing fear, and that instant I must've passed out.

I woke up to the call of the hawk. He was asking for the bill, I paid it and he left. Instantly the chain of events of

the previous night came back. But somehow they appeared sort of funny and even silly. Yet as the sound of pacing continued everyday I grew anxious and weary and maybe even delirious. I began to hallucinate and have nightmares. One night, I had a dream where I saw a very elegantly dressed nobleman imploring me to set him free. It was only then I began to conceive the whole idea. I went down the auction house to inquire about the painting. The people over there recognized me easily and the person in charge quietly called me aside and began to talk to me

in an almost inaudible voice. I, by then very much intrigued, listened intently.

By the time I reached home, night had sat in engulfing the world in an infernal shroud of darkness. Straight away, I got a knife from my kitchen and went to my bedroom. As I stood before the painting I knew those blazing eyes were watching me. Slowly I raised the knife and maybe for an instant hesitated as it almost seemed the figure blinked. I slowly attempted to scrape off a tiny bit from the picture and instantly a thin flow of bright red liquid began to seep down from the wound — it was blood! I felt my body going numb and my nerves coming on to the very verge of a breakdown. Gathering the courage I had left, slowly I picked the painting from the wall took it to my kitchen and burnt it along with the frame. I looked on as the beautiful painting turned into a mass of glowing embers — this was the end.

At the auction house earlier — I had come to know many new things about the notorious landlord. It appeared he eventually came to his senses, came to repent his misdeeds and had committed suicide by hanging himself from the ceiling. After his death, a painting, apparently the very one I had bought was found in his room. His near relatives alleged that a silhouetted figure was seen roaming around. But you know how superstitious the village people are! Many years nothing was heard of it until very recently.

Even today when I think of the extraordinary events that took place so many years ago — I experience a strange kind of contentment and bliss, for I had come to be exposed to the satisfaction of setting a trapped soul free.

Woody Working

Part II

ANNIE HALL (1977, MGM/UA, Criterion) (laserdisc) The Best Picture and Best Director Oscar winner (it also won Keaton a Best Actress award), this remains a heartbreaking chronicle of doomed, la-di-da bicoastal romance. Cameo alert: Jeff Goldblum on the phone at an LA party ("I forgot my mantra"). Sigourney Weaver in a trench coat as Allen's date outside a movie theater. Funniest found punch line: Tony Roberts says, "Max, there's no crime [in LA], there's no mugging." A+

MANHATTAN (1979, MGM/UA, B&W) This urban valentine, Woody's last to date with Keaton (not counting her cameo in Radio Days), is also a stinging portrait of a terminally distracting city that dooms its residents to futile, unfulfilled relationships. Biggest post-Woody-and-Mia punch line: Woody says of sex with his 17-year-old girlfriend (Mariel Hemingway), "As long as the cops don't burst in, I think we're gonna break a couple of records." A+

***STARDUST MEMORIES (1980, MGM/UA)** Anyone who knows Fellini's 8½ well enough to catch all the echoes in this half baked homage will be dismayed at how trivial Allen's concerns seem. He plays a filmmaker besieged by freakish fans at a seminar, voicing a torrent of mid-life anxieties that mostly sound like spoiled, cranky whining.

Cameo alert: Sharon Stone can be spotted kissing a railway-car window. C+

***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SEX COMEDY (1982, Warner)** The dawn of the Mia decade: Another Bergman retreat (Smiles of a Summer Night), about three unhappy turn-of-the-century couples who philander one weekend. Although it's beautifully shot, it's trifling and leaden. Sure sign Woody's stalled: He brings back Tony Roberts for a male reprise of their old banter. C

***ZELIG (1983, Warner)** A technically dazzling fable, done in counterfeit newsworld style, about a flapper-era public figure who could literally, physically become all things to all people. Chilly and brilliant. Supremely Freudian gesture: Mia plays Woody's analysts; by curing him, she makes him cease to exist. A-

***BROADWAY DANNY ROSE (1984, Vestron, B&W)** A sweet anecdote, relayed over Carnegie Deli sandwiches, concerning a schmo manager of bad nightclub acts and his escape with a lounge singer's mob-connected mistress. Mia makes an utterly authentic moll, honking Jerseypeak in a big blond wig and dark shades, but the peak is a helium-factory shootout. B+

***THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO (1985, Vestron)** What if a depression-era movie character (Jeff Daniels) came down off the screen and romanced a battered wife (Mia)? The inspired complications create a wrenching parable about the pull fiction has on people, and the sorrows of living for escape. A-

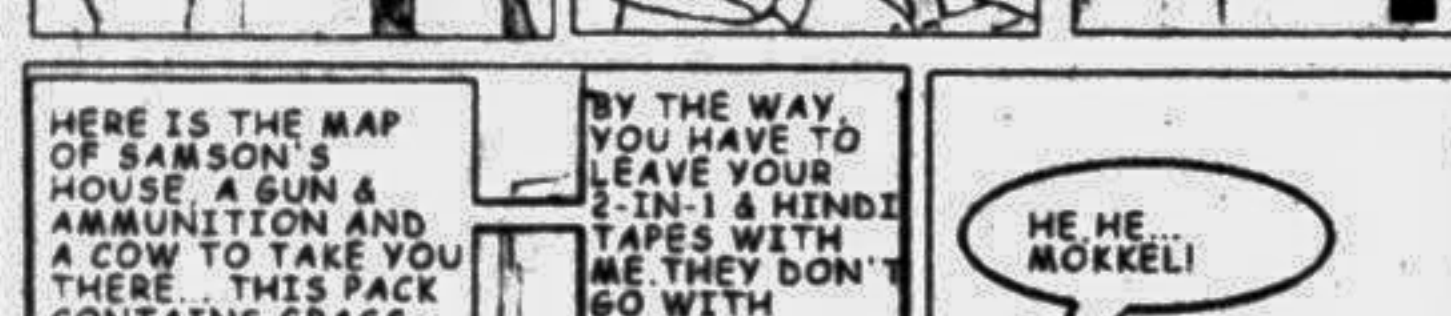
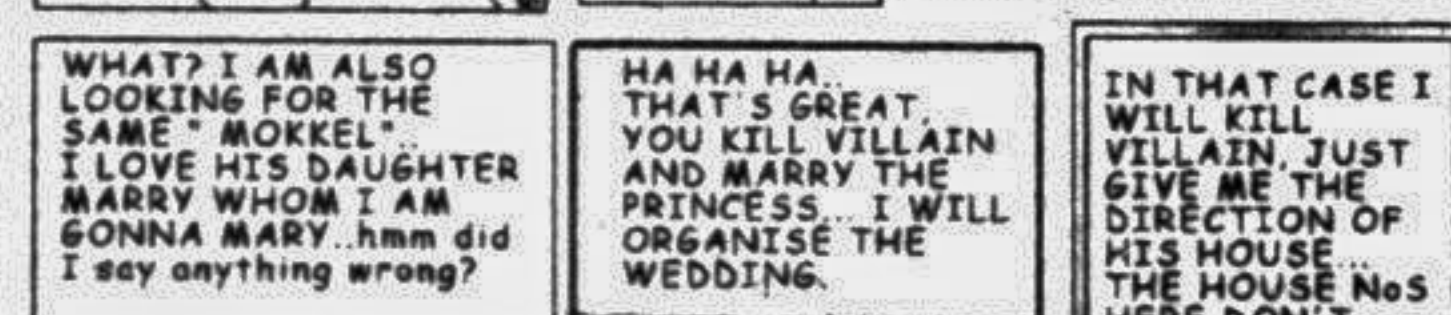
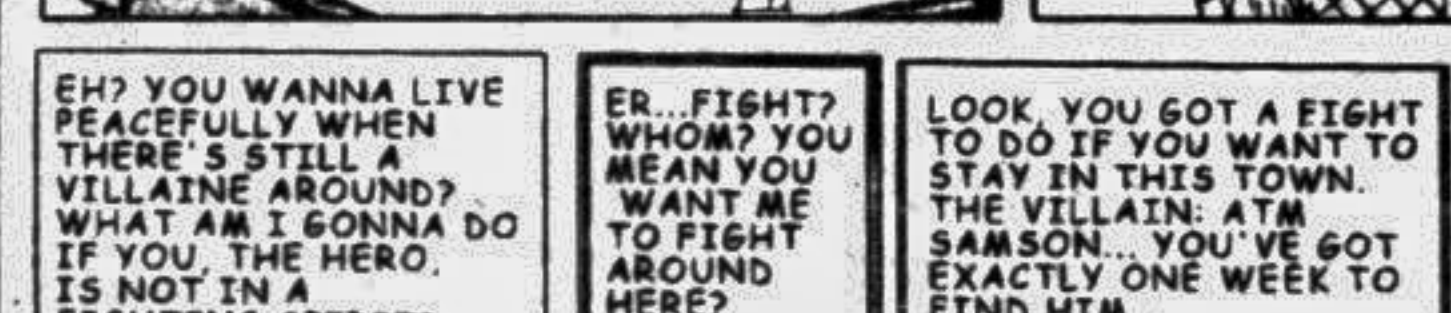
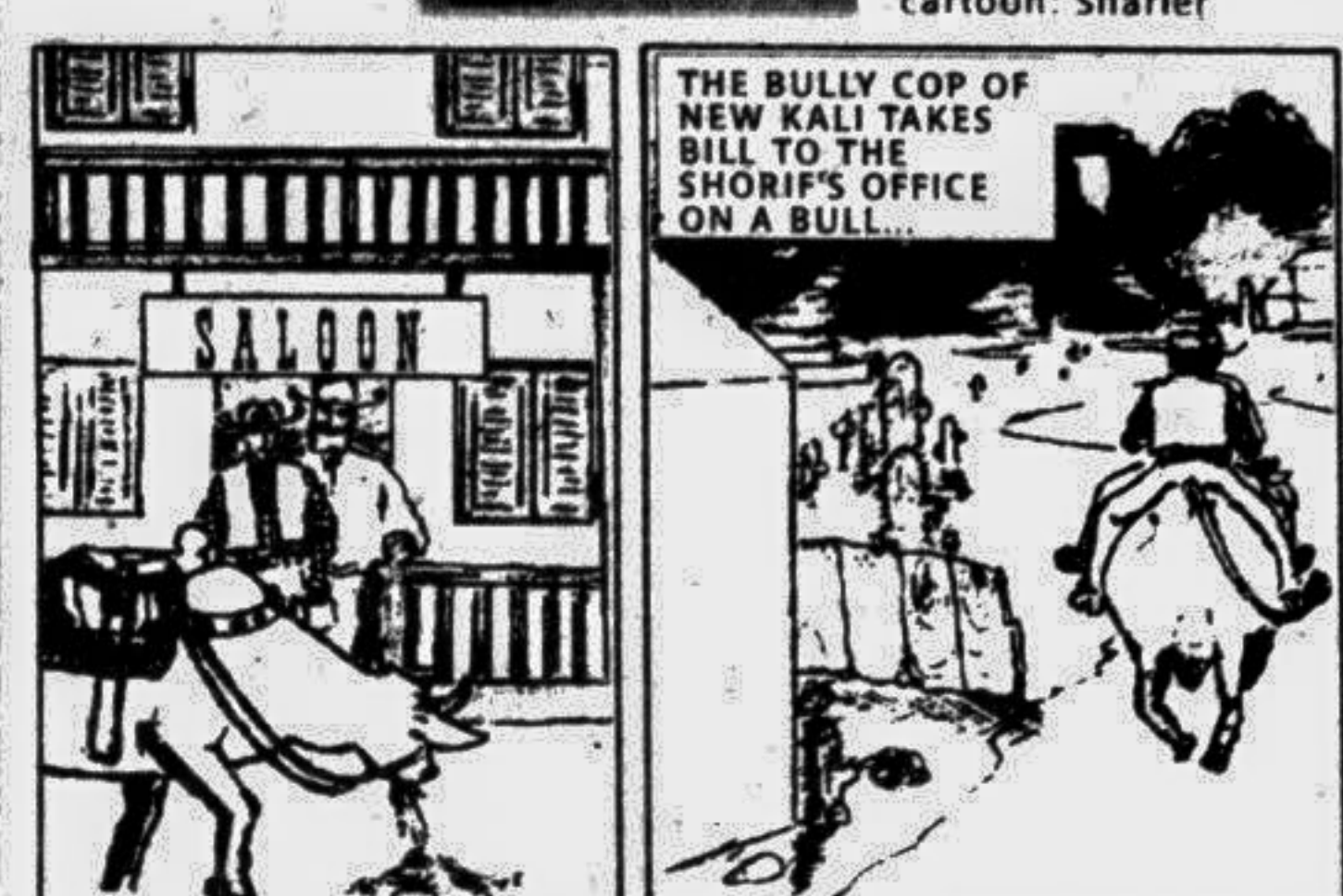
***HANNAH AND HER SISTERS (1986, HBO)** The juiciest pick for post-scandal clucking: Look, there's Mia's real-life mom, Maureen O'Sullivan (she called Woody evil!), playing the mom of Mia's earth-mother character in scenes shot at Mia's apartment, and there's Michael Caine looking Allenesque in dark-framed glasses, playing a man who seduces his wife's younger sibling (Barbara Hershey)! But the movie will outlive these and many other eerie echoes. Funny, touching, novelistic in scope, and exquisitely choreographed — watch the camera glide with people across rooms, like a partner in a dance — it's the richest family saga this side of the Godfather movies. A+

***RADIO DAYS (1987, HBO)** An affectionate, rambling reverie, tracking one Queens, NY family's love affair with a forgotten wartime pop subculture of comedians, chanteuses, newscasters, and golden-throated announcers. Two-for-one muse alert: Mia and Diane Keaton both play singers. B

***SEPTEMBER (1987, Orion)** His worst. Shot in a sepiia haze that's almost unwatchably dim on video, this lumpy amalgam of undigested swipes — a bit of Bergman's Autumn Sonata here, some doomed-Chekhov-clan allusions there — links together a group of summer renters, each in love with, but rebuffed by, another. Perversely setbound and artificial, it's keyed to Mia's queasy enactment of a clinical depressive's

***ANOTHER WOMAN (1988, Orion)** A doggedly serious, shamefully derivative (of Bergman's — yes, him again — Wild Strawberries) wrap-up to Allen's trio of laughless, boiled-sterile dramas. It wants to illuminate a dry, pinched person (Gena Rowlands as a forbidding intellectual in mid-life crisis), but it's dry and pinched itself. Gossip tidbit: Mia, playing a suicidal psychiatric patient named Hope, was pregnant at the time with Satchel, her child by Allen. C+

Courtesy: Entertainment Weekly



To be continued

Quotable Quotes

For thence, a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks.
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail;
What I aspired to be
And was not, comforts me.

Robert Browning

Better be proficient in one art than a smatterer
in a hundred.

Japanese Proverb

Strong love and proud ambition have no
bounds.

John Dryden