

I INVOKE ARTEMIS (II)

Also shortly to be published on Scribd (excerpts):

PROLOGUE

My name is Eris and I am a non-person, Despite my non-existence, I am introducing a tale of that theocratic, patriarchal, and unyieldingly fascist animal currently calling itself the British Left: I say introducing: most of the work's been done by Athena. She's a Professor of Philosophy. She's much more intelligent, informed and rational than I am. She would be, wouldn't she! She's pretty good at strategy, too, but we'll get to that later. I just like to play. I'm sure you'll be able to see where I've taken over the story. Pan will explain how we get involved here. Let's just say for the moment we're ancient Greeks. We do reason. And also of course democracy.

It has of course been observed - reading about ourselves is awfully jolly - that we goddesses were not the embodiments of the perfect citizen-wife, except perhaps for dear Hestia tending the hearth. Indeed, it has been noted, drily, if anyone came across us in vacuo, he or she might assume us a modern construct, an imposition of more modern values on an ancient culture, obviously phoney, standing out like blackbirds on a snow-field. Neither anxious little Mary nor great earth mother, we embodied in fact female possibility, the capacity for more than reproduction, nurture and making sure dinner was on the table, but that we had to work out for ourselves.

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Rock idol Stavros Santinides waded into the Danish cartoons controversy. Gimme a break, man! 1.How and 2. Since when has writing been 'Tory'? Since when has art been 'Tory'. Since when have creativity and other intellectual activity been 'Tory'? Since the October Revolution of 1917? Labour is traditionally the Party of the arty, the intellectual, the anarchic with no time for authority, the goddamn hippy longhair. Lemme put this simple. If you are not a Muslim, Mohammed is the guy who wrote the book. The book contains the bits the bombers justify the bombing with. End of story.

Asked to elaborate on his view by the NSS, he had this to say

We shall defend our island with the Fish Cheer. It will not be expected. They have minds like rats, following pre-established pathways. To them, all opposition comes from dashed true blue colonels in Cheltenham.

Why isn't the EU Constitution modelled on the US Constitution?

GIVE ME AN F!

Where's the First Amendment?

GIVE ME A U!

Where's the Second Amendment?

GIVE ME A C!

Why are you such a sordid little creep?

GIVE ME A K!

What's that spell? Free people can be awfully difficult, can't they.

GIVE ME AN F!

Beat them into submission, of course, of course.

GIVE ME A U!

Prosecute anyone who's half-alive.

GIVE ME A C!

There's no such thing as freedom

GIVE ME A K!

What's that spell? We don't want people who think or argue, do we.

GIVE ME AN F!

The last thing we want is intelligent people criticizing morons.

GIVE ME A U!

They speak their minds. I'm speaking mine!

GIVE ME A C!

All animals are equal, hey?

GIVE ME A K!

What's that spell? Liberty is an illusion, a bourgeois fantasy.

GIVE ME AN F!

People must not be upset by people saying what they like. Some people must not be upset. Other people

may be half-killed.

GIVE ME A U!

It is not permissible.

GIVE ME A C!

Alles in Ordnung, mein Fuhrer. Befehl' sind Befehl'

GIVE ME A K!

What's that spell? It spells a British government that hates freedom and democracy and wishes to eliminate both. One more time, how do you all hope to stop Bleagh if you can't yell louder than that:

The campaign to remove Bleagh intensified.

"What the - " began Britannia.

"Hades?" suggested Puck.

"You know who he really is, of course."

"I know who he really is, of course."

Naturally Stavros received the requisite number of death-threats. He recorded a cover version of 'Iron Man', adding an extra verse of his own: 'Is Bleagh live or dead? The Pope's thoughts have filled his head...'

The Vatican does not issue death-threats. It does, however, inveigh against the satanic nature of rock 'n' roll.

I am Artemis. I lie in the long grass, my head resting on Apollo's chest, a scene readily misunderstood. He is my brother. We are very close - not that close. When I say I am a virgin goddess, I mean it, Got that, mother-fucker? How badly do you want to die? I'll say this for C21st England. It is – for the moment – easier for a girl to go out in very little. But really Daddy can't you modify the climate just a teensy bit.

"Perhaps they should all murder their fathers," I murmur.

I feel him laughing.

"Exterminate all men!"

"If the majority of those in power were women, this would not be happening."

"Have they lost their minds/Over the future of womankind! It will take more than rock lyrics."

"They must be made objects of ridicule, the stranglehold broken"

Yes, of course I am the goddess of hunting. I am also the patroness of young girls.

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THE HEAVY MOB MOVES IN

Being myself the victim of the greatest slander campaign in history, I have a soft spot for Dez. My name is Pan, Pan, got that, not Satan, not Lucifer, Pan. Sure, I really like the girls. If you have even a tenth of a brain you can work out that if (f)rollicking with me had led to a death-mask of terror, the nymphs would have given me kind of a wide berth. In fact they teased me. You can really tell how petrified they were. I am the god of nymphs and shepherds. I protected flocks.

How freaking domesticated can you get! Yes, I like wide open spaces. Yes, I like the wilds. Yes, I like making the straights jump. I'm a muso, man! Causeless terrors, got it. Ancient Greece was full of wild beasts, lions, wolves, bears. I protected the freaking flocks from them, not freaking was them!

Do you know, I have never killed a human in my life! You want a killer? Try Artemis. She's the goddess of wild animals and ruthless with it. Guess that doesn't fit with the phallic imperative, right? If you want rip, tear, rend, think Actaeon. If ever a guy had blood on his hands, it's Zeus, but I get the shite. It pisses me. You have no idea how much I appreciate the modern world and its rejection of judging by appearances. Not that I even look like Satan. Satan has three faces and three pairs of black leathery wings.

The animals sacred to me are goats (of course) and tortoises. How murderous can you get. If you want my secret shame, I keep a few tortoises.

All the same, having had my life ruined by both Christians and pagans talking through what's between their legs instead of what's between their ears, I currently manifest in human form, as a rock star, to be precise, hence my use of English. It amuses me. I live on Richmond Hill, London's Arcadia. That amuses me too. I get music. I get chicks. I get a reasonably wide-open space and to crown it all, at least when I arrived, I got a few sheep to protect (it's just cows these days). We all have a pad there. You know they got chucked off Olympus. I guess I'd better qualify the word 'live'. There's a row of Georgian properties. We occupy the top storey of all of them knocked into one, except as far as humans are concerned the top storey isn't actually there. It may not be Olympus but once you get inside it's not much different. The metaphysics is Athena's stuff. She's a Professor of Philosophy. Zeus is CEO Megabytes Unlimited. Aphrodite's a designer. When we miss the sun, it's handy for Heathrow. Joke: the sun is of course ever-present. As god of medicine and healing, Apollo takes a personal interest in all this, but he does see that sending a plague to exterminate every doctor and nurse in London is not the best solution. I think he does. If buboes appear, you'll know why. Then he gets really creative and that could be worse, mutters the Apollo landings haven't happened yet.

Professor Pal is pretty pissed off about what's happened to Dez. OK, OK, Athens was a boys' club. Pal has pretty strong views on that. They would have got there! They had reason! They had, says Pal, loudly, role models. Not like the fuck-ups who followed. They had reason. This society is currently running as fast as its fat little legs will carry it back to the primeval swamp. The fucktards screwing Dezzi have about as much reason as a freaking amoeba.

Screwing Dezzi, now there's a thought. Down, boy! This is business. I think I need to make some straights jump real high.

If you want to be boringly linear about this, the agents of the fascist bourgeois imperialist state talked to the Vice-Chancellor and he talked to the Faculty of Arts. Medicine has always been a problem-child.

Look, I am not Satan, OK. I'm actually quite a nice guy. But I do admit – when there's real freako psycho clerical turd to handle I do not object to pretending to be Satan. Nice but amoral. Satan is immoral. Different.

Pal is one cool chick. You know she's the goddess of war, of course, but that's not really exact. She's the goddess of strategy, of tactics. Blind rage is Ares' stuff. We're trying to keep him out of this for the moment. I expect you're wondering how he fits into C21st London. The short answer is he doesn't. When I say we have a pad, I mean a base. It suits some of us to be permanently resident, others not. Poseidon of course. Ares is in Afghanistan. Artemis in Richmond Park – it's a bit like one of those ascetics who surround themselves with naked women to prove they have self-control. Fortunately they do a cull. She spends a lot of time in Central Europe. The one thing that really freaks Pal is that situation we have here, a rational educated female being treated like a naughty child. She keeps her head. That could be a problem, because it's a rather good one and I get the feeling the natives want to decide the tactics.

"I'm sure they won't be sexist," I said.

If looks could kill.

The Church of the Blessed Virgin in Haringey is troubled. Very troubled. It lies in carefully tended grounds on which the marks of a cloven hoof keep appearing. Curly horns lie atop the bad C19th portrait of Leo XII. After that I get naughty. When Father O'Leary launches into his diatribe against rising secularism, he smiles suddenly and welcomes gay Catholics into the bosom of the Church. I can be quite subtle, you know. At first it sounds as if he is asking them to repent and become celibate. Later, when he is emphasizing the really important, the only important thing is for people to love each other for better or for worse, and to stay faithful to each other, that is less clear.

Possession! We must call the Bishop! Another small job successfully completed.

Pal laments the segregation of medical students from the rest of the University, describes it as intellectual apartheid, apartheid always being a word to get the twitched twitching. Should they not,, she enquires, learn something of our intellectual heritage. She stops just short of saying should they not learn to reason. The Deans of the Medical Schools prevaricate, timetables already overloaded. They stop just short of saying, not like you free-loaders. Ten hours of lectures a week!

Aphrodite took advantage of the spring collection to lay into the emaciation of some models big-time. She said she designs to celebrate women's bodies not to distort or annul them. She could be an absolute bitch when she was younger but it's just that she's a bit highly-strung. Being a full-time god(dess) is a pressurized job, never mind being the goddess of love. Darling, she says now, it was total Hades! You can imagine, can't you, every spotty love-sick adolescent, every cuckolded husband, every besotted maiden. Great Aphrodite, you gotta help me! 24/7. Glad I stuck with the sheep.

Hermes grumbles at the extra work. When you are Messenger of the Gods and the gods retire from divine duties, you have time on your hands. Now he's been pulled out of a life of leisure, as ever Zeus's right-hand man. Zeus digs. As any good Leninist will tell you, you can really hurt the rich by stripping them of their assets and stringing them up from lamp-posts. There are other ways. One is finding out where their money comes from and finding out where it goes to and telling everyone. Of course it does help to be a god, no sudden death in mysterious accident, but all the same when I look at the so-called Left I find them as much of a farce as Dez does. What they ought to be doing is tracking capital, but that's dangerous, so much safer to demand an apology from some hapless Christian who said God bless you! to a sneezing atheist.

None of us has a problem with Jesus. He's a good bloke. He says what he thinks and no faffing around. I've had a lot of talks with him. Sheep and shepherds, rather a lot in common really. You see, I'm the Bad Shepherd. Thank you, no, it doesn't mean I'm ultimate evil. It just means I didn't and don't love the sheep and the sheep really want to be loved. Of course I protected the flocks. When I remembered. When I wasn't otherwise engaged. The straights' word is negligent. Diligent, I wasn't terribly diligent. I sure as Hades did not sacrifice and would not have sacrificed myself to save the sheep, in any sense. I asked Jesus once was it worth it? He said yes. Yes, if even one person got the point. I don't think I'm being completely fair to myself. I'm not omnipresent. How can I put this? Yes, of course I rescued Portly! Only because I happened to be around at the time. Millions of other utterly cute and helpless otter-cubs die. What humans don't understand – this is really Pal's stuff, but I'll give it my best shot – all the hi Telemachus, I've come down from Olympus to sort your life out for you – we exist in a different layer of reality. You see a god either because you are seeing the reality where the god is or because the god has entered your reality and wants you to see him OK, her.

In a minute or ten, I'm going to lecture on morality, so I guess I Pan, who am not, repeat not, Satan, but sure am not ultimate good either, had better say what I mean by that. How it begins is people do not fuck other people around. Only gods can fuck people around, as in personal intervention. People do not fuck other people around because they claim a god told them to, even if the god did tell them to. We're gods. We can do our own dirty work. Now, we've been around a long time. Most of us have learned to play nicely in the playground with the other kids, human and divine. Not wanting to snub Jesus and a few other genuinely good guys, this isn't so much because we've learned from them as because we are not thick. What did that Cats guy write, 'Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication!' Right. Nor did Classical Athens! OK, we really thought we were it,

the sine qua non. We needed to get out more. But humans! What would you do with them! Just because they thought a god said something in 4000 BC, he can't move on? To get back to the fucking about, that is actually true, we did give a helping hand to humans we took a liking to and screwed the ones we didn't.

After all, they were worshipping us. Couldn't completely ignore them. As you know, we got really embroiled in some of the mega human-messes, like that business at Troy. Later events forced a re-think, I think you could say that. We had a really good fit of pique first! Rejected! After all we've done for you! But none of us loves them, loves them because they're human. It wasn't just that and it wasn't just that they didn't believe in us any more – half of Classical Athens didn't believe in us. The total rejection of everything. The Olympus crowd did rather pride themselves on keeping up with the latest developments in philosophy, you know! Analysing the reasons for our non-existence! Even me, country boy outside all the time, we had music, singers, travelling players, recitals, I like to think I was always *au fait* with the performing arts. After all, Apollo only beat me at music because he cheated. I have to laugh. I mean, which symphony orchestra in the world wouldn't hail Apollo as its patron, but me? You cannot be serious! We had to really think about what these human animals are. Two things stood out. They hadn't all decided to love one another. What they had decided to do was reject all reason, all thought. We were really quite shocked. Why had they done this to themselves? We had to find somewhere to live that was at least slightly civilized. One of the reasons they came to England, because Christianity was relatively sane here. They thought of France BUT the Church. I only came after industrialization took off. Besides, I was invited!

This is the land where liberty
Lit grave-browed Milton on his way,
This modern world hath need of thee!

A land of ancient chivalry
Where gentle Sidney saw the day,
Ah, leave the hills of Arcady!

This fierce sea-lion of the sea,
This England lacks some stronger lay,
This modern world hath need of thee!

Then blow some trumpet loud and free,
And give thine oaten pipe away,
Ah, leave the hills of Arcady!
This modern world hath need of thee!

-Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)

Looks like I'm going to have to do my bit, huh? They're doing it again! Now the bloody Vatican has muscled in, it's getting as mad as the Muslims. Mad as those farts who evicted us. We have lo-o-ong memories. We're Ancient Greeks. We do reason. And of course democracy. Some guys are going to have remember Marathon.

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Good afternoon. My name is Phoebus Apollo. It is said that when I enter a room it is as though the sun has come out on a dark cold winter's day. That is as it should be. Of course the sun also scorches, withers, desiccates, destroys.

I am Apollo. I burn.

This Bleagh creature, a Catholic monkey, an offence to Oxford, to England, to humanity, a barbarian.

As Pan has so touchingly said, we did not love the sheep. It was not necessary to love the sheep to attempt to save those who still worshipped us from the fires and racks of the 'apostles of Love'. We found them despicable. We still do. We have never ceased so to do.

By the way, I did not 'cheat'. I merely displayed superior intelligence. I think some sort of Mark of Apollo in order. Skin cancer?

A lyre, I think, shot through with an A

There is of course temporarily branding them. The marks should appear slowly on the most public and embarrassing of occasions. The appearance should not cause pain, better the victim does not know until others around him or her react. Excruciating pain is to be experienced only if there is attempt to remove the brand with soap and water. They believe, do they not, in power, arbitrary unaccountable power.

To delineate what we oppose is to see how to oppose it. Are criminality, psychosis, irrationality, cowardice, ignorance, irrationality, bestiality, the human ape triumphant, not 'the will of God'. Let us see what else may be dismissed as the will of a god.

The phantasm of the minds of male baboons, Yahweh-Allah-Jehovah, does not of course exist. The Mind of the universe exists. Call it what you will, the notion it requires propitiation, worship is faintly ludicrous, but then of course the human baboon is more than faintly ludicrous. So they think other humans their property, their toys to do with as they wish. Let us see how they respond to being playthings of the gods.

Ah, Mr Bleagh, shall that flight you expect to take to address, extremely lucratively address, a conference of fellow-perverts in Vienna be grounded by a freak sand-storm apparently centred on what is laughingly called Brighton Beach.

I shall begin with confusion to the enemy! An act of pure benevolence, a miracle, such as might be attributed to Jesus himself. After all, are they not my faithful?

Every case of skin cancer in London was instantly cured. Something in the water!

Naturally sufferers from the rest of the country and then the rest of the world flocked to London. It was rumoured the healing springs spouted forth in Trafalgar Square.

Dermato-oncologists were not only confused but forced to find a new career direction, usually working for Thames Water.

"Poseidon?" asked Britannia.

"He could really mess it up!"

"I don't understand the target," said Oberon.

"They don't exactly love the Church, do they."

"That's what I said! I don't follow. How does making Trafalgar Square into Lourdes - ?"

"Those whom the gods wish to destroy?"

"They're mad already."

Britannia considered.

"So far it doesn't show enough to get people to act."

"So?"

"Not sure."

"Should we make the first approach?"

ARTEMIS' ARROWS

Professor Pallas is something of a dark horse, a rank outsider appointed, a visiting Professor, she was, well, you know what that means, see them about once a year, to a Chair more commonly held by those whose reputations have considerably preceded them. Nonetheless the publications history is exemplary, the lecture at the Symposium ground-breaking, the performance at interview over one of the great conundrums that has faced philosophy since the days of Plato quite shattering.

An obscure college in the Peloponnese, I understand. An Oxford accent, nonetheless: not short of a bob or two, one concludes. One must not be insular (good to know standards haven't collapsed everywhere!) The one lingering doubt is that she may be well, a little old-fashioned, a little conservative for our – consumers but no, she clearly likes intelligent young people and shows herself as willing to learn from them as to teach them. She clearly likes intelligent older people too; fools, not. Much like Mrs Thatcher as she then was, the new professor quickly makes lifelong enemies, but in her case these are vastly outnumbered by lifelong friends.

Of course this has nothing whatever to do with her gender.

Pal quickly assesses which of her colleagues has a vestigial tail. One such is Bob Phelps, a small pink man, a Professor of Biochemistry, who reminds her of a small rubber ball and tempts her to bounce it. On the science side, Phelps is regarded as a dangerous man to cross, the biological sciences side at least; the chemists and physicists have little time for him. Certain administrative duties accompany Pal's post, mostly for the profoundly intellectual reason that the newbie gets the dodos, and she finds she has to attend the monthly meeting of the Information Governance Committee. Two students have been outspoken on social media sites and this, Phelps says, is unacceptable. The University's reputation! Pal raises her eyebrows. For concealment of lechery? Surely only if they have lied? Phelps is quite sure Dr Murgatroyd is incapable of such behaviour. Why? asks Pal. The students should have in the first instance reported the matter to their Head of Department. Not, thinks Pal, if he is anything like you. There can be no automatic assumption of guilt or innocence. The monthly meetings of the Information Governance Committee begin to gain a reputation all their own.

“He doesn't like women?” asks Pal of her fellow-philosophers.

“Doesn't like people! Probably doesn't like cats. Anything with the temerity to be independent of Bob Phelps.”

“One of the worst,” sighs another, “biology's riddled with them.”

“Worst what?”

“A primitive materialist. A hundred years of physics has passed them by! If it's not in a test-tube, it doesn't exist.”

“I think he applies that to people. Solipsist may be a better word. Since nothing and no-one with the possible exception of certain amino acids has independent existence, existence outside Bob's great mind, everything and everyone is at his disposal.”

“Entertainment lies in attempting any kind of intelligent conversation with him, opinion so trite it's painful.”

“He does not waste his time reading books. The physicists have the most fun with him. He crucifies himself implying they're not real scientists.”

“A popular man, then,” said Pal.

A friend she finds in Bill Foromonovic, Senior Lecturer in Greek. Bill describes himself as a lapsed Catholic.

“Your background is Greek Orthodox?” he hazards.

“I have learned in Northern Europe not to refer to myself as pagan. It has such silly connotations.”

“Hellenismos?”

“That does not precisely describe – what shall I call it? A realm of belief which has neither intellectual foundation nor external ritual and which has never entirely been annihilated. The gods are there. Perhaps you talk to them. Perhaps you pray to them. Perhaps you half-pray, half-talk. They are part of your life.”

“Well, well, well!” said Bill. Pause. “You know that's pretty much how I feel about Jesus.”

“But lapsed.”

“Definitely.” He laughed. “I had a good priest – I mean he's a good priest and a morally good man, still a friend. He practically begged me to stay.” He laughed again. “He said the Church needs Greek scholars! Meaning Greek scholars with their feet planted firmly in the C21st, more than enough of the other kind. I did and do see the point but I said no. They go backwards.

Disappear up their own into a world that never existed because you cannot combine the mind of Augustine with quantum physics. They need to lose Europe.” He gave a wry smile. “After all, a split has been tried already. I really don't see myself as Luther nailing my theses, all of course in perfect Attic Greek, to the door of Westminster Cathedral. They think themselves the fount of western civilization. That is worse than false. They think themselves synonymous with Jesus and most of them would have buried him – idiomatically - as readily as the orthodox of his day crucified him, a trouble-maker, disobedient, as they bury all attempt at reform. Through them his teachings survived. Despite them, we have freedom, democracy, medicine, quantum theory. What do you make of the Vatican?”

“A dinosaur that doesn't know it's dead?”

Bill snorted.

“Horribly true! My own analogy – the chalice thinks it's the wine, the cup-bearer thinks he's the cup. It survives because it represents – because it holds something so vastly greater than itself.”

“I was about to say,” said Pal, “but yes, I think you are right. About to say it survives on mass ignorance, gullibility, irrationality, but if all the intelligent, informed, rational leave, then the mask is stripped, an empty shell. The wine does not require the chalice?”

Bill smiled.

“The wine is rather special wine. It can stand up on its own.”

Hephaistos grumbled. I'm a smith not a mason!

But can you do it? asked Apollo.

Of course I can do it!

Ah, the University, the Quad, the Rectangle, the Square and the Octagon - not only are these verbal people; clearly they know something of mathematics. It is the start of the academic year, unusually hot for October. The grass has had time to recover from summer trampling and welcomes excited freshers.. In the midst of the gently buzzing crowd appears a quite startlingly good looking young man in black jeans with a black bandana around his long curly hair and a black T-shirt, and some kind of a wooden choker. Girls do not look at his choker, but if they had they probably wouldn't have recognized it as a little phorminx. The young man is apparently oblivious and wanders off to get a coffee.

Apollo spends a long time casing the joint. Having found the Department of Greek, he traces it to its furthest extent which is a south-facing courtyard of irregular shape – how dare they - across half of which runs a crumbling brick wall of apparently no purpose, separating one patch of grass from another. Nonetheless, the courtyard is sheltered and clearly tended, a few late roses and chrysanthemums. Around the grass, runs a path. On the path are a couple of benches. On one of them is a girl failing to organize a coffee, a lunch-box, a small pile of books and a lap-top. To save the lap-top the books must fall. She swears fluently, spills the coffee on her leg and makes a sort of fouch! noise, for the coffee is hot.. Apollo picks up the books for her. *The Duchess of Malfi?*

“Not a student of Greek?”

“Grief, no! I like it here. Not many people know about this place.”

“How true.”

He goes on his way and vanishes off through the swing-door.

The corridor is brightly lit and lined with posters, timetables, reading lists suggestive of life, but there appear to be no humans. He is looking for the office of Dr Bill Foromonovic. Ah! And the light is on.

He knocks firmly on the door.

“Enter!”

He smiles warmly at Dr Foromonovic, much like an interviewer greeting a particularly nervous candidate.

“Do excuse me. I found this. Strange thing, some kind of paperweight? I thought I'd better hand it in.”

“Good of you,” murmurs Bill, concealing his surprise at confronting a youth closely resembling the Apollo Belvedere. “I must apologize, don't know everyone yet. Are you one of our freshers?”

“Post-grad,” says Apollo, “bane of my life, my youthful looks.”

Bill notes the phorminx and smiles to himself. He must know what he looks like! Bit difficult to carry a bow around London.

“Then I must apologize again! A strange thing, as you say.” A small squat arrow sits on the desk between them, arrowhead rather, only no-one ever made an arrow of what looks like translucent marble. “I shall send an email! Has anyone lost a paperweight? That will I think be comprehensible only to the owner.”

“Then I shall not disturb you further.”

Bill returns to the nightmare of timetabling a wide array of subsidiary subjects, and not only those of students of Greek for the Department worked closely with SOAS and taught both Greek language and Greek culture to students of Persian and Iranian, Sanskrit, Ancient China, and indeed there was now to be a full degree in the Ancient World, though the content was not yet fully threshed out. Philosophy with Greek and Ancient History with Greek were standards as of course was accommodating the Latinists. Study of the ancient world was thriving. He knew the opinion of the funding committees was split down the middle on this, what's the point, versus what the point is: enthusiastic, highly educated, articulate people spanning the globe who know the world began with neither Christianity nor Islam.

The paperweight or whatever it is sits on his desk. His eyes keep being drawn to it. I should have taken his name. He berates himself briefly – I should not accept being busy as an excuse in others! Ah well, I'm sure I shall see him around. The more you stare – extraordinary, quite extraordinary. It's like – the most beautiful picture you have ever seen but you can't say what it's a picture of.

Only if you keep staring you can. Surf, clouds of foaming surf and half-veiled by them the form of a woman in a short tunic with a bow. He blinks, laughs. Ridiculous! Tricks of light and texture. No, little paperweight, Aphrodite arose from the foam, not Artemis. He looks again and it seems that the woman turns into a most imposing figure of a man, broad of chest, bearded. This is really very clever. There must be a chip. A very sophisticated version of those – oh what d'you call them. Things kids used to have where you shake them and snow falls. I want one. It's delicious.

Someone is having me on? Perhaps truly it is lost property and someone is going mad looking for it. If you possess this, you do not carry it around with you as though it were a phone. How then do you come to lose it? The thing is distracting him and he truly is busy, busy, busy. He puts it in the drawer and sends the email.

There is another smaller courtyard, square, barely larger than a pocket handkerchief, off-limits, mostly decorative gravel in the midst of which on a pedestal stands an of course imitation Grecian urn. The walls which bound it are glass, letting natural light into the 'museum', a small but much loved collection as much a question of sentiment as of scholarship, photographs of 'me with my first shard', a few small relics, anything of moment having been delivered to the BM, the minute office of the Head of Department, Prof Santos, and what is dubbed the internet cafe, being the computer and reprographics room, in the corner of which is a coffee-machine, a water-dispenser, a small fridge and a couple of easy chairs. All in all a considerable number of people see a shower of golden arrows fill the urn. A third-year grins evilly. It's a show we put on for freshers. The trajectory...mutter the mathematically inclined. The trajectory, others note drily, is suggestive only of heaven. The courtyard can be accessed by anyone with a key but only Estates have a key and by the time they arrive a hundred phones are clicking. It is all most untoward and indeed disruptive. Call the *Fortean Times*! Student are shepherded off to wherever they ought to be, but not before some cheery soul has urged caution, could be contaminated, coated. Can't be too careful these days. Is this biological warfare! First the biochemists then the chemists are pulled in. The real problem, remarks a shaken chemist is they do appear to be pure gold. Well, we are short of funds! A rather unusual anonymous donation. But provenance. Fell off the back of a lorry, guv? Should we call

the police. How can you lose 12 golden arrows! Naturally this curious incident makes the news.

Phelps of course is furious. A childish stunt! Phelps does not think the Faculty of Arts houses serious people like himself. Serious people get things done in this world. Serious people do not lounge about reading or waste public funds on discerning the nature of truth. Serious people know facts when they see them. Serious people live in the real world and do not let matters of principle get in their way. He has been astonished in the past at how many of even his own colleagues in the biological sciences fail to be serious people, the new venture being kept under wraps, what the eye don't see, the heart don't grieve over, eh, he really does not want his new Centre for Biomedical Research scuppered by adverse publicity.

How, Bill, asks himself, can you have 12 golden arrows? One would be bad enough. The cost excludes a jolly student jape. A point is being made, for the moment obscure. A stunt? What is an area of contention? The Marbles! Wrong building, guys, the BM is next door. He opens his drawer and stares just a little unnerved at the toy, paperweight, whatever, which has changed. Marble, black marble, but it's not like a lump of marble, it's like a bottomless pool of liquid marble into which you could dive, in which you could drown – were you approximately the size of a paper-clip, of course. He pauses, suffering a moment's acute data overload. Just at this moment, he really doesn't want to remember that the altar at Delphi was made of black marble

He looks into the pool, stares into pink and gold and peach and sunset and then stars, endless stars. Microsoft do that one, he mutters but the stars coalesce as galaxies, which then dissolve, scatter at the approaching sun. Uh

A very expensive trick. Who has the money? Hellenismos?

There had been a somewhat awkward incident when both the Hellenic Society and the Islamic Society had booked the same room. Two rational solutions presented themselves - one group go elsewhere or a fascinating discussion of Sufi examination of Greek thought. Neither had been taken up. The reciting of a prayer to Athena in front of a Muslim woman in a niqab could have turned quite nasty, were it not that the recitation was in Greek. Most of his students regarded Islam as a Johnny-come-lately, possibly the worst being the son of Iranian refugees whose favourite attire was a T-shirt with 'Mazda lamps stay brighter longer' on the front. Perhaps fortunately, not everyone got the allusion.

Time to teach! Afterwards, I think, a word with Jim.

Jim is on the 'phone, hold up his hand. Yes, yes, no. He cuts the call.

“Bloody arrows!”

“You ain't seen nothing yet...Someone gave me this yesterday. Said he'd found it and was handing it in. Look at it. Look into it.”

Jim looks.

“Good....gods!”

“It does not help that he looked like Apollo!”

“Beware of Greeks....If you were given this, there was presumably some purpose to it. Other than ogling Aphrodite.”

“Why?” demanded Bill. “Why should it not be ornamental? The same could be said for the arrows!”

“It could. Have you tried to find out how it works?”

“Of course not. Break it.”

“We wait, I think, for something more clearly defined.”

“Bring Them Back!” said Bill

“The gods?”

“The Marbles!”

“That occurs to me also. This Department at least does not need to be reminded of Greece.” Bill gestured at the Thing. (His mind had been tempted to call it the Oracle and he had quashed that one fast. “You keep it.”

“When things settle down - “ He laughed. “If things settle down, I'll have a real session with it.”

“A libation, at least,” said Jim.

“Any excuse will do.”

Jim called him at 8.30 the following morning.

“It seems the Medical School is in chaos.”

“Dare I ask?”

“Item: There's a rather fine statue of Lister in the lobby. It has been crowned with vine leaves and adorned with a lyre.” Bill began to pretend to sound like a staid academic suitably shocked, but Jim was continuing “Item: Behind the main reception desk has appeared a full-size portrait of a naked Apollo with a small plaque reading 'God of Medicine and Healing'. Item: on the half-landing is a full-sized portrait of Athena, fully clothed, I hasten to add – labelled of course 'Goddess of Reason' – surrounded by a rather pointed collection of books. *On Liberty. The Open Society and Its Enemies. The Age of Reason.*”

Bill sighed.

“And they think our kids – I don't suppose they even know where the Medical School is.”

“Item,” continued Jim, “an extraordinary creation, a (19th print of the riots marking the admission of women to the Medical School heavily Photoshopped to include Athena confronting the rioters with Medusa's head and Artemis stage right pointing her bow at them. A further full-length portrait of Artemis in her hallmark tunic bears the legend 'Mini-skirts are old-fashioned.'”

Bill could not suppress a yelp of laughter.

“The students from a Hindu background express considerable enthusiasm for goddesses. The students of Greek descent crawl on the floor with laughter. A Miss Shah and Miss Al-Khanoum,, in appearance quite conservative, giggle and remark the Lord Apollo is rather sexy. A Miss Mahmoud in a skirt so short as to be barely extant yowls with laughter. The usual number of Christians and Muslims are outraged. These are overwhelmingly male.” Bill sighed again. “It has been said to me, thinly – I do not like that man – no matter how diverse the backgrounds and beliefs of our female students, they have one thing in common - “

“They want to be doctors not doormats,” finished Bill for him. “The overwhelming majority recognize cause and effect?”

“Just so.

“Can't they get him on medical ethics! If he doesn't like Jews and women, how can he be fit to practise?”

“He's clever. It's not actually he who makes the remarks that have almost the entire campus fuming. He merely invites the speakers who do and sits smiling through his beastly little Himmler spectacles.”

The Treasurer of the Islamic Society is a medical student.

Jim's turn to sigh.

“The other divide of course is between first years of narrower background and those who know the context.”

“Welcome to the University! Complaints to mum and dad?”

“Almost certainly. Phelps of course.”

“Of course.”

“Breaking and entering is undoubtedly a criminal offence. I am really not sure of the status, legally or in any other way. Can one say something has been vandalized when it is unbroken? And indeed unmarked.”

“Spend hours on that one! I put up a picture. I remove it. At least there's a hook, a hole in the wall.”

“Just propped,” said Jim.

“I am trying to connect this with our arrows. Artemis' arrows could bring destruction to women. If we are being subtle here, whoever 'we' are, might we not be symbolizing destruction to women has penetrated the heart of the University?”

“They shall not pass!”

“Who's stopping them?”

“That just may be the question. Round up the usual suspects!”

The Chair of the Hellenic Society is either in bed with flu, Prof, he has a temperature of about 40! or concealing injuries sustained during felonious activity though like everyone else Jim is unable to see how both alarms and guards were circumvented. Jim is prepared to keep an open mind.

“We didn't do it. We wish we had, but we didn't.”

Bill looks at his schedule. Certainly there are many things he needs to do, ought to do and sometimes even wants to do but there is nothing he has to do for three and a half-hours.

He takes the Thing out of his desk, pockets it, and skives off to the Goat and Compasses, thinking a sequence of events – it's university business, Jim but not as we know, it.

Jim meanwhile was reading a lab report. The arrows tested negative for the full range of known deadly toxins but did appear to cause spots. Well, itchiness, like nettle-rash. Must be the alloy, some kind of metal allergy..

The Goat and Compasses has a fine beer garden. He sits himself down, takes a swig of his pint, then firmly lifts it and pours about half a cupful onto the grass. Now, by the blessed gods, little paperweight tell me your secrets. Does it have to be shaped like an arrow? . And now the sun is shining on a London street lined with cheerful crowds and ambulance men, police-officers standing by and cheer goes up as a single female runner appears, apparently effortless, streaking past like the wind, running a – marathon?

'What is this thing! The word Ask comes instantly into his head. Ask what! Who are you? I am Apollo. Obviously, says Bill to himself, that is my projection. Or obviously not. Apollo Belvedere is approaching his table. Am I dressed for this!

“Twelve golden arrows are a very expensive joke.”

“No joke. May I have a crisp?”

“Is it wise to refuse?”

Apollo picked up the bag.

“I love Smoky Bacon!”

“Hmm. Charred to a cinder? Who are you?”

“I am Apollo.”

“You will forgive me if I have difficulty in believing that.”

“Oh yes.”

Bill snorted.

“Let us stick to essentials. You, whoever you are, clearly wish to converse with me, who know who I am.”

“This society has two pillars, Athens and Nazareth, love and mind, if you prefer not to be parochial. These are universal values, facets of the human animal. Both have been rotted, largely by those charged with upholding them. You are a lapsed Catholic.”

“Easy enough to find out.”

“You can't stand them. I can't stand them. Already we have much in common.”

“This is - “

“War,” said Apollo. “The arrows are hallmarked.”

Bill reached into his pocket and silently handed him a boring letter about a committee meeting and a biro.

Apollo briefly drew, a circlet of four pairs of antlers.

“Hmm! That still does not necessarily.”

“It just creates a link between me and my sister's arrows.”

“You appear to be communicating to me that England has incurred the wrath of the gods.”

“We came here because it was relatively civilized.”

Say that again slowly, thought Bill.

He said: “From the point of view of a scholar, that's a story I'd like to hear some time.”

“They threw it all away under the banner of Faith. Now they use Islam to do it again.”

Bill raised his eyebrows.

“That is my interpretation. It is not the usual one.”

“We have friends in common.”

“We do?”

“Professor Pallas.”

“Oh no,” said Bill. “I have – always thought of her as a rather special lady.”

“She is,” said Apollo.

“Agent in place?” suggested Bill. “Suppose I think of you as human plotters.”

Apollo gave the smallest shrug.

“The total destruction of their power needs those not susceptible to destruction of either body or reputation.”

“But without human support - ?”

“One cannot uphold democracy without the support of the demos. We wondered if you would care to join us for dinner.”

“Ambrosia?”

“Whatever you choose.”

“Ah. When in Greece...Olives I think will figure largely.”

“When do you finish?”

Midnight, thought Bill. The chances of my getting any work done today are slim.

“Six.”

“Pal will pick you up.”

“P- fine.” Live the dream! “May I ask – what is this thing exactly?”

“What did you call it?”

“T- oracle!”

“You ask. It answers.”

“So does my tablet,” said Bill. He picked up the Thing. “What was the location of the debate between Anaxagoras and Plato?” Trick question. Apollo smiled but Bill was muttering to himself no, a computer could compare the dates (Plato was born in the year before Anaxagoras's death) even as the Thing showed him Zeus laughing. “Screen-saver,” said Doubting William.

“You could call her Sibyl,” said Apollo. “If I briefly transform, you will say it is something slipped in your drink.”

Bill spluttered.

“That may be worth it!”

There seemed to be a lot of golden light.

When he gets back to his office, a copy of the lab report is on his desk. Of course there could have been something slipped in my beer. I think I shall wait a little before making it generally known we have attracted the attention of the gods.

Pal knocked on Bill's half-open door, entered without waiting

He smiled.

“Well, lady Athena, I seem to have gone up in the world. You are, you know, going to have to explain to me how it works. Goddesses can get away with silence. Not Professors of Philosophy.”

“Later.”

Bill looked around. He wasn't entirely sure how he'd got here or maybe the rational part of his mind was screening it out. There are limits!

“A veritable home from home.”

Olympus? Yeah, it's like it is on the film-sets, a tasteful mixture of white gold inlaid with silver and the curious translucent white marble of the Thing, full of palest peach, palest blue, palest primrose, like a particularly stunning sunset.. All the soft furnishings were silver fleece. The light was befitting a mountain-top. He wandered over to the window, expecting to see – what? The

foothills of Olympus, celestial towers? What he got was the view from Richmond Hill.

“Charming,” he murmured. You are having me on.

World-famous rock idol Santinides appeared.

Bill's eyes widened. He was about to say you got dragged in too but Stavros held out his hand in a business-like fashion and said, “Pan. Tends to unnerve humans, my actual appearance.”

“Yes, it would”

Pan waved at the surroundings with a wicked grin.

“Have to keep up appearances! If you went to Balmoral, you would have certain expectations, which would not include minimalist design and op-art.”

“That is true,” said Bill.

Pal appeared/re-appeared/manifested.

“Making friends, good, good.”

She wore standard upper-class female Athenian dress.

“Glad to see you take the helmet off occasionally - “ Words failed him as he turned into a soppy mass of adoring babble.

“Turn it down, sweetie,” said Pan.

Aphrodite became normally devastating instead of abnormally.

“Madam,” said Bill, recollecting himself. “you can only be.”

“Just don't ask who is the fairest,” hissed Pan.

“Trouble-maker!”

What Bill instantly described to himself as a little wide-eyed poppet appeared.

“I'm Eris.”

“All hail Discordia!” replied Bill promptly, then paused “You are not – and this may be just about the biggest faux pas since ever – all Olympians.”

“We're those who like it here,” said Pan promptly. “Shall we – I mean personally marble bores the shit out of me.

“Me, too, darling,” said Aphrodite.

“Design has really moved on,” said Pan.

“The Garden Room,” said Aphrodite. “Don't you just love Peter Jones!”

“I love,” said Bill instantly, “the Garden Room. It may be just slightly doing my head in, but I love it anyway.” It may be the scent of the hibiscus. I have walked through a door into a room, not a garden, not even a walled garden, though it has walls. How then do I define it as a room? It has an immeasurably high ceiling of, I suppose, glass. It also, and this is the catch, appears to stretch to infinity, as though – as though you can just see the boundaries, immeasurably – what else – distant. It has a stream and a little wooden bridge over the stream, a clearing in a grove – presumably sacred – and in the clearing small tables of intricate metal work and by them – he snorted – couches, the *kline* as interpreted by modern designers, of the same delicate and intricate metal work but upholstered like a chaise-longue, and a central long low table of the same design laden with food and drink.

“Pad Thai,” said Pal enthusiastically.

“Yummy,” said Aphrodite. “It really pays to get out more.”

“You are not - “ said Bill cautiously, “ - yours is not the only pantheon - ?”

“My point exactly,” said Pan.

“The Jade Emperor,” said Pal, “is a good friend.”

“We think we've got problems!” said Pan.

“We have problems,” said Pal. “Late again! The twins.”

“I think you do not mean Castor and Pollux.”

The deer chariot hove into view, high-stepping hinds apparently skilled in dressage.

Apollo stepped out.

“The traffic,” he murmured airily.

Artemis released the hinds from their harnesses and they wandered off to graze.

“Well?” she demanded.

“Everything's cool, babe,” said Pan..

Artemis glowered at him then turned to Bill

“Are my arrows safe?”

Bill grinned.

“You tell me! They seem to cause itches.”

“Obviously we didn't want to start with a plague,” she said briskly.

“The target of nettle-rash is unclear to me,” said Bill.

She giggled.

“It's not exactly nettle-rash.”

“He's been playing in the lab again,” said Pal

“It is not widely known,” said Apollo, “that my remit includes pharmacology. A psychotropic substance known to the ancients which has still not been clearly identified. Its common name is mind-itch. It's a test.”

“It's inhaled,” said Pal. “The effect depends on the victim.”

“Victim?”

”Trippy,” said Pan.

“I think of it,” said Apollo, “as a mind-irritant. It is liable to attack, at unexpected moments, those parts of a mind that are sealed shut and cause the victim to have what to him or her are impossible and perhaps even intolerable thoughts, with which he or she must then deal.”

“The pictures too?” asked Bill.

“Oh yes,” said Apollo.

Some hours later, Bill is saying, “A society that wouldn't let a woman within ten miles of fighting its wars venerated a woman in full battle-dress! What is your explanation?”

“Virginity,” said Artemis promptly. “If we start from the paradigm that man is perfection and woman defective, we must then ask what is the defect? A woman could be a man if only we poor silly things could control our urges - “

“Both control our desires and not fall sway to the desires of others,” said Pal. “A virgin demonstrates controlling reason.”

Bill hooted.

“Not what I learned in Catholic school.”

Some hours later, many things have happened. Bill became slowly aware the garden was alive. It wasn't just the adorable little brown tortoise that nuzzled his feet.

“He's hungry,” Pan had said anxiously.

“Lettuce?” suggested Bill

The others laughed.

“Don't start him off!”

“There is so much misinformation about the diet of tortoises,” tutted Pan. “Point him towards the hibiscus. They're sweet little things but they're not, you know, terribly bright. I think it's because we're eating. A confusion of odours. So many pet tortoises die just because they're fed the wrong things.” Just at this moment, thought Bill, the great god Pan reminds me of nothing so much as an anxious twelve-year-old. “I've started a public education campaign.”

“Is it all right to pick him up?” asked Bill.

“Scoop him up from underneath,” said the nerdy bespectacled twelve-year-old. “Never pick them up by their shells.”

Beyond the dazzle of the hibiscus lie the trees. I am aware, Bill thought, that though they do not step out of the trees, though they are at the same time of the trees, which is of course impossible, but what isn't, there are dryads watching, laughing, talking to each other, even flower-nymphs. The tortoise was nibbling enthusiastically and Pan still holding forth upon tortoise nutrition. The nymph of the hibiscus seemed to be dancing. Not sure about that, thought Bill. Does she like being eaten? Is she distinct from the leaf being nibbled? I have questions!

Pal began to expound her plan for SPQR, the Society for the Protection of Question and

Reason. With just a little difficulty Bill began to think, hard.

....

“The point is,” said Pal, “not one of these people has a single free democratic bone in his or her body. A massive public education programme is required.”

“The question is,” said Bill, “the – degree of subtlety.”

“Nothing like thunderbolts,” said Pan. “Where is Papa tonight?”

“Entertaining,” said Pal briskly.

Bill kept his face impassive.

Apollo changed into a well-known presenter of the weather.

“Thunderbolts are expected overnight over much of Scotland, moving south during the day over the Pennines, and expected in London in the early evening. Weather warnings have been issued. You are advised to seek underground shelter.”

“That bad?” asked Bill.

“Perhaps a little hard to explain,” said Pal

“That of course,” said Artemis, “is the other key issue.”

Bill turned to her and found her changed into a young Margaret Thatcher.

“Whole new meaning to identity theft. A trick with possibilities.” He looked hopefully at Apollo. “There's probably a law against impersonating the Prime Minister.”

“Venison,” said Artemis. “I see no law against turning him into venison.”

“Torn to pieces by his hounds?” suggested Bill. “A shocking end.”

“I don't think he has any hounds,” pointed out Pal.

“That may be fortunate,” said Bill.

“The other key issue,” resumed Artemis. “To what extent must events be comprehensible to humans?”

“That's for later,” said Pal.

“Depending, as it does,” said Apollo, “on the consequences of words.”

“And music,” added Pan.

“Certainly music,” agreed Apollo.

“There have been many words,” said Bill, “but perhaps not the key words.”

“Agendas,” sighed Pal. “It appears to be necessary to have an agenda.”

Bill looked shocked

“You have no agenda?”

“How can we?” sighed Pan

Bill realized he was a little bit lost and felt his way carefully forwards

“You mean at some point the – purposes of – Olympus, if I may put it like that, and those of mortals diverge?”

“Oh, that, yes,” said Pal dismissively. Bill thought that if she were human he might have detected a note of how much should we tell him and saw no reason why her being a goddess must mean that note couldn't have been there.

Pan caught his eye. Tell you later.

Hmm!

Aphrodite looked up.

“Tub-thumping. Awfully dreary.” She smiled. “Let me call this meeting to order.”

“Target-audience,” said Artemis. “The human race.”

A rock-star, thought Bill, reaches places professors of philosophy do not. A designer...I think this is planned. What is? Essential to this is what people are, I understand that. Is what the gods are equally essential?

“The message is not complex,” said Pal.

“That's the problem,” said Bill. “That which is basic and non-negotiable has been negotiated.”

Though colleagues noted a gastro-enterologist (male) not so much acquire a whole new

Look as divest himself of the tedium of either ironing shirts or having them ironed for him and a female pathologist suddenly realized she had very good legs and started to dress them in sheer black tights and distinctly impractical shoes, medical students became more argumentative, and two senior chemists resigned to first marry each other and then to join a gay commune, the mind-itch had no results that could not be attributed to other causes, or in other words (Artemis's), it didn't work.

Cumulative, said Apollo.

Artemis invited him to make it into a spray.

"There is something called an LD50," he mused.

"That's the one."

Bill begins to put out feelers and soon has most of the Department wanting to learn more of SPQR.

"I have to ask you," said Jim, "if this has anything to do with arrows."

Bill burst out laughing.

"You are accusing me?"

"Just asking."

And I, thought Bill, should be a downright liar if I said no, but that is not the exact question.

"I had no part in our anonymous donation. I had no part in the - invasion of the Medical School. I had no foreknowledge of these events."

Jim looked at him cynically.

"Nicely put. Should our investigations perhaps extend to Professor Pallas?"

Bill found he was rather enjoying seeing if he could get out of this without actually lying. After all he could always put his hands up and extend an invitation to Richmond Hill.

"Pal, I'm sure, had neither part in nor foreknowledge of."

"She's an attractive woman." That feint will get you nowhere. "And of course she is a Greek national."

"She has many friends. Some of them are on the letterhead. Will be!"

"Greece's Namazie."

"It would seem to me, and I have thought about this, that British women do not so acutely perceive the threat. Which is not to say that should it become up, close and personal, they will not rise to the occasion."

"Greek Orthodox?"

"Not. In her own words, she has learned not to call herself a pagan in northern Europe because it has such silly connotations. Broadly Hellenismos, yes. Vaster rather than narrower. This is not let us raise a temple to Zeus on the site of the Abbey!"

"She is after all a philosopher. I should not expect anything literalist. "

"Exactly what are you thinking?" asked Bill.

"I take it she's fond of Byron. Curious, is it not, that our political leaders fail to grasp that some immigrants want England to be a free country."

"I have other words for that," said Bill.

"We know that those wanting a free country are largely erased from the political discourse. Exactly? Why do you think this venture can achieve a breakthrough?"

Sex, drugs and rock and roll, thought Bill.

"Sex, money and rock and roll."

There was a moment's pause, then Jim bellowed with laughter.

"Backers?"

"A multi-national as I'm sure you know, the signature line of which is exquisite items of fine lace which are not tablecloths. Zacharias Gavapolis is another name I'm sure you know. Stavros Stantinides."

Another pause.

"A well-connected lady. Rather Greek?"

"Not by the time we have half the academics in London on board. But the money upfront

for PR, yes, that is Greek – if money has a nationality. Most of it. Some of it's French. It's an interesting question. La raison! Et bien sur la liberte! For the Greeks, for the French, these are intellectual issues in a way that is quite simply foreign to England! Partly perhaps that is complacency. We have assumed we are free and are taken aback to find there is no longer consensus.”

“The old cliché - there never was a war for which England was prepared.”

“A matter of culture, certainly, but culture at a level – like eating with a knife and fork not chopsticks.”

“And suddenly people take exception to knives.”

Artemis took a lot of trouble over designing the label, which must look utterly standard. Everyone knows vermin are a major problem and regular deinfestation both routine and vital. The name of the product is KILLIT in big red letters under which is a picture of a dead cockroach. Being a goddess has its uses. You do not have to carry your cylinders of KILLIT but merely summon them. She sprayed offices, she sprayed boardrooms, she sprayed kitchens and left neat packs of six canisters in the corners with a note to the cleaners please use daily for six weeks, signed of course The Mgt.