

The heavy mob moves in: “We’re Ancient Greeks. We do reason. And of course democracy.”

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. 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 heads 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 in the roof-garden.

Having had my whole being mutilated 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.

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. And naturally gay rights. Some guys are going to have remember Marathon.

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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 simplö. 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.