

DAPHNE TRANSFORMED: PARTHENIUS, OVID, AND E.M. FORSTER

by Frederick Williams

The classic form of the story of Daphne, the huntress who evaded Apollo's lustful advances by undergoing transformation into the bay tree which thereby acquired her name, is the one we read in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1. 452-567.¹ This version begins with a quarrel between the mischievous young god Cupid and his overbearing elder brother Apollo about their respective skills with the bow (lines 452-65), which leads to Cupid's revenge: he fires a leaden arrow at Daphne which has the effect of suppressing sexual desire, and a golden one at Apollo which induces it (466-77). As a result Daphne devotes herself to virginity and hunting, with the reluctant acquiescence of her father, the river-god Peneus. Apollo duly falls in love with the nymph, but his lengthy speech of self-commendation cuts no ice with Daphne (490-524); instead, she takes to her heels, and he pursues her (525-42), but of course the odds are unequal, and when she can run no longer, she prays to her father² to destroy the beauty which has brought her such unwelcome attentions (543-47). Immediately, her transformation into a tree begins, and at this point Apollo catches up with her, and, foiled of possessing her sexually, finds consolation in claiming her as his own tree, a status she appears to accept (548-67).

Before Ovid transfigured the story, there were other versions, foremost of which is that transmitted by Parthenius, the eminence grise who is thought by some to have guided the early efforts of many of the innovating poets of the generation before Ovid,³ in his *Erotika Pathemata* ('Love Stories') 15:

¹ So A.H.Griffith in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed., 1996) 429, who is non-committal on the relationship of Ovid's version to that of Parthenius. The existence of F. Bömer's monumental work, *P. Ovidius Naso. Metamorphoses. Kommentar. Buch I-III* (Heidelberg, 1970) obviates the need to cite earlier literature. In this paper I follow the age-old English practice of using the terms 'bay' and 'laurel' as equivalents, even though, as Professor John Richmond reminds me, this confusion could have unfortunate consequences in the kitchen.

² Some manuscripts present an alternative version in which Daphne prays to Tellus, the earth, her mother, which has fuelled discussion of the so-called 'double recension' of the *Metamorphoses*: see Bömer ad loc. W.S. Anderson's Teubner text (Leipzig, 1977, 18-19) does not present the evidence as clearly as one might wish.

³ His importance was asserted by W. Clausen in an influential article, 'Callimachus and Roman Poetry', *GRBS* 5 (1964) 181-96, which he reiterated in E.J. Kenney (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature 11: Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1982) 184 95.; his views have been widely accepted, e.g. by T.P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet...* (Leicester, 1974) 44-58; E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993) 213-4 is more cautious. The new edition of Parthenius by Jane Lightfoot (Oxford, 1999) contains (50-76) a thorough re-examination of his influence on contemporary Latin poets.

Περὶ δὲ τῆς Ἀμύκλα θυγατρὸς τάδε λέγεται Δάφνης· αὕτη τὸ μὲν ἅπαν εἰς πόλιν οὐ κατήει, οὐδ' ἀνεμίσγετο ταῖς λοιπαῖς παρθένοις· παρασκευασμένη δὲ πολλὰς⁴ κύνας ἐθήρευεν καὶ ἐν τῇ Λακωνικῇ καὶ ἔστιν ὅτε ἐπιφοιτῶσα εἰς τὰ λοιπὰ τῆς Πελοποννήσου ὄρη· δι' ἣν αἰτίαν μάλα καταθύμιος ἦν Ἀρτέμιδι, καὶ αὐτὴν εὖστοχα βάλλειν ἐποίει. ταύτης περὶ τὴν Ἥλιδιαν ἀλωμένης Λεύκιππος Οἰνομάου παῖς εἰς ἐπιθυμίαν ἦλθε, καὶ τὸ μὲν ἄλλως πῶς αὐτῆς πειρᾶσθαι ἀπέγνω, ἀμφιεσάμενος δὲ γυναικείαις ἀμπεχόναϊς καὶ ὁμοιωθεὶς κόρη συνέθηρα αὐτῇ. ἔτυχε δὲ πῶς αὐτῇ κατὰ νοῦν γενόμενος, οὐ μεθίει τε αὐτὸν ἀμφιπεσοῦσά τε καὶ ἐξηρητημένη πᾶσαν ὥραν. Ἀπόλλων δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τῆς παιδὸς πόθῳ καίόμενος, ὀργῇ τε καὶ φθόνῳ εἶχετο τοῦ Λευκίππου συνόντος, καὶ ἐπὶ νοῦν αὐτῇ βάλλει σὺν ταῖς λοιπαῖς παρθένοις ἐπὶ κρήνην ἐλθούσαις λούεσθαι. ἔνθα δὴ ὡς ἀφικόμεναι ἀπεδιδύσκοντο καὶ ἐώρων τὸν Λεύκιππον μὴ βουλόμενον, περιέρρηξεν αὐτόν· μαθοῦσαι δὲ τὴν ἀπάτην καὶ ὡς ἐπεβούλευεν αὐταῖς, πᾶσαι μεθίεσαν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰς αἰχμάς. καὶ ὁ μὲν δὴ κατὰ θεῶν βούλησιν ἀφανῆς γίγνεται· Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ Δάφνη ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἰόντα προῖδομένη, μάλα ἐρρωμένως ἔφευγεν· ὡς δὲ συνεδιώκετο, παρὰ Διὸς αἰτεῖται ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀπλλαγῆναι· καὶ αὐτὴν φασὶ γενέσθαι τὸ δένδρον τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἀπ' ἐκείνης δάφνην.

This is the story told about Daphne, the daughter of Amyclas. She would never go down into the town, nor even mix with the other girls; instead she acquired many dogs and would hunt both in Laconia and also on occasions going further afield into other mountainous areas of the Peloponnese; for which reason she was a favourite of Artemis, who gave her the gift of shooting accurately. When Daphne was wandering in the hinterland of Elis Leucippus, son of Oenomaus, fell in love with her; he despaired of winning her by any other approach, but dressed in women's clothes and began to hunt with her, disguised as a girl. He actually became her favourite, and she would not let him go, embracing him and clinging to him at all times. Apollo, who was himself burning with desire for the maid, felt anger and envy towards Leucippus for being with her and put into her mind the thought of going with all the other girls to a spring and bathing there. When they arrived there, they started to strip; when they saw that Leucippus was reluctant, they tore off his clothes. When they realised how he had deceived them and plotted against them, all of them drove their spears into him. He, by the gods' will, disappeared from sight; but when Daphne espied Apollo coming at her, she began to run away for all she was worth. When Apollo pursued her, she prayed to Zeus to be set free from humanity, and people say she became that tree which is named daphne after her.

⁴ ὄϊ ἐῖ•Ι is my own slight modification (which I discuss in Eikasmos 10 [1999] forthcoming) of Zangoiannes' brilliant conjecture ὄϊ ἐῖι ×Ι ἐβίáΙ; the manuscript has ὄοεί•Ι.

Though it would be misleading to claim that Parthenius was the single source which Ovid has transformed, the version he transmits must have been available to Ovid, whose story clearly differs from his in a number of significant respects: (i) he sets his story in Thessaly, not in the Peloponnese; (ii) his Daphne is the daughter of a river-god, not, as in Parthenius, the eponymous hero of a Laconian city; (iii) accuracy in shooting not mentioned by Ovid as one of Daphne's attributes, but the question of marksmanship is the *casus belli* between Cupid and Apollo which provides the initial motivation for the whole episode, and it recurs later in Apollo's speech;⁵ (iv) the complication of Leucippus, his cross-dressing, and the Apollo-Leucippus-Daphne triangle is absent from Ovid, who has transferred the motif of rivalry between males to the opening scene of the quarrel between Apollo and Cupid; (v) in Ovid, Apollo's pursuit of Daphne dominates the story, whereas in Parthenius it is only one element;⁶ (v i) in Parthenius, Daphne prays to Zeus, who effects her disappearance or metamorphosis, while in Ovid it is her father, the rivergod Peneus, who performs this service; (vii) Ovid's Apollo assigns Daphne, in her new arboreal form, a role in the state religion of the as yet unfounded city of Rome, and gives the story a specifically political and contemporary dimension by alluding to the fact that the laurel figured prominently among the official honours accorded in Ovid's own lifetime to the emperor Augustus.⁷

It is this Ovidian version of the story which has inspired a host of imitators in later literature, to say nothing of painting, sculpture, and music. A simple list of such imitations occupies no fewer than eleven closely-printed pages of Jane Reid's monumental reference work, *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1900s*.⁸ Strangely, Dr Reid omits one great writer of our own century who made considerable use of the ApolloDaphne story, namely E. M. Forster. Admittedly, the short story *Other Kingdom* in which he remodels the myth (first published separately in 1909, and twice included in collections edited by the author himself)⁹ is not among the best known, or most frequently discussed, of his works: several books on Forster ignore it, some barely mention it, others, perhaps significantly, misquote its title as *The Other Kingdom*.¹⁰

The story though short is complex: it is narrated by the odious Mr Inskip, tutor to the cynical but talented young Jack Ford, who is the ward of Harcourt Worters, a wealthy entrepreneur

⁵ At lines 519-20, where Apollo admits there is one arrow even more accurate than his own.

⁶ One must of course allow for the strong possibility that Parthenius did not reproduce the proportions of the story in the earlier versions he was citing.

⁷ See the note by B. Curran and myself, 'Laurel boughs', *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 6.8 (October 1981) 209-12 and my article, 'Augustus and Daphne: Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1,560-63 and Phylarchus FGrH 81 F32(b)', *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 3 (1981) 249-57; cf. also P.E. Knox, 'In Pursuit of Daphne', *TAPA* 120 (1990) 183-202. I take this opportunity to make a point which previously eluded me: while Apollo's prophecy of the distant future surprises the reader, it occurs at the point where, in other versions, Apollo confers on his female victim the gift of prophecy - of which there is no hint in Ovid: cf. Phylarchus, FGrH 81 F32(b) (= Plutarch, *Agis and Cleomenes* 9.2): Thylarchus on the other hand says she was the daughter of Amyclas, called Daphne, who fled from Apollo when he tried to have intercourse with her and turned into the [bay] tree, and was honoured by the god, and received the gift of prophecy', or Normus, *Dionysiaca* 42. 387-90: And the daughter of Ladon, the celebrated river, loathed the business of marriage; a Nymph, she became a tree that whispers inspired words; with her prophetic berries, fleeing from Phoebus' bed, she came to crown Phoebus' hair.'

⁸ New York, 1993, vol.i pp.325-35.

⁹ It was first published in *The English Review* 2 Only 1909) pp. 651-72, and republished only a few weeks later, in *The Living Age* 262 (28 August 1909) pp. 547-61, and subsequently included in *The Celestial Omnibus* (1911), and again in *Collected Short Stories* (1947); 1 quote from the Penguin edition of the last (1954).

¹⁰ E.g. S.K. Land, *Challenge and Conventionality in the Fiction of EM Forster* (New York, 1990), and N. Beauman, *Morgan: a biography of E.M. Forster* (London, 1993) 244n.

who owns an estate in Hertfordshire. Worters is engaged to be married to the enigmatic Evelyn Beaumont, described by the narrator as a 'crude, unsophisticated person ... beautiful and ludicrous in the extreme, and ... extremely pathetic'. As a wedding present, he buys her Other Kingdom Copse, a small beech wood adjacent to his own property; he is determined to have the combined properties fenced in, and a bridge built over the small stream that divides them, and paths laid: Evelyn at first resists these 'improvements', but later acquiesces. In the meantime, Jack has been expelled from the household for an indiscretion, despite Evelyn's intervention with Harcourt on his behalf. After an ominous illness, Evelyn returns to her wood, now fenced and furnished with bridge and paths, and provokes Harcourt into chasing her into the trees: she apparently disappears. Harcourt suspects she has eloped with Jack, but his investigations produce no result.

It may seem that Forster has reproduced at least some of the structural features of Parthenius' version, for example the existence of two rival suitors (one of whom is whisked away from the action before the denouement), and the comparative unimportance of the pursuit, and this need occasion no surprise: his reading in the classics was by no means limited to the beaten path,¹¹ and Parthenius, combining as he does the exotic and the erotic, is likely to have attracted Forster's attention. Nevertheless, his story clearly and cleverly reflects Ovid's narrative: (i) Ovid's opening scene, the quarrel between Cupid and Apollo, reappears as an underlying antagonism between Ford and Worters, which manifests itself in the form of token physical violence at the picnic in the copse (70), and leads to Ford's expulsion from his guardian's household. (ii) The theme of archery is transposed to the scene where Evelyn explains to Harcourt the local custom of lovers carving their initials in the bark of the beech trees ("Ugh!" He pointed to a large heart transfixed by an arrow.' [731]; when Harcourt tries to observe the custom, he cuts himself, and sheds blood (74). (iii) just as the river Peneus plays a significant role in Ovid, first in ratifying Daphne's vocation to virginity, and later in preventing Apollo from violating her, the stream which separates the copse from Harcourt's property is seen by Evelyn as protecting her preserves, and she resists Harcourt's plan for 'a rustic bridge' (72). (iv) A number of allusions suggest Harcourt's Apollinity: according to Inskip he is 'tall and handsome, with a strong chin and liquid brown eyes, and a high forehead and hair not at all grey. Few things are more striking than a photograph of Mr Harcourt Worters.' (72); and he describes him as 'radiating energy and wealth, like a terrestrial sun' (76). Both characters are adept at advertising their own virtues: Ovid's Apollo orates at length to Daphne, boasting of his personal hygiene, divinity, parentage, wealth, and accomplishments (lines 504-24). Harcourt makes himself more odious still by resorting to mockmodesty: 'My name is plain Harcourt Worters - not a well-known name if you go outside the City and my own country, but a name which, where it is known, carries, I flatter myself, some weight.' (64). (v) In Ovid, Daphne's metamorphosis into the bay-tree is unambiguous, and described in detail (lines 548-52); what eventually happens to Evelyn is only hinted at, so that the reader, no less than her fellow characters, is left bewildered. But several times earlier in the story Forster uses the language of metamorphosis, stressing the identity of girl and tree. For example:

¹¹ His short story *The Classical Annex* (the date of composition is uncertain; it was published in 1972, after Forster's death, in the collection entitled *The Life to Come and Other Stories*), relating an act of intercourse between a statue and a young man who gains entry to a museum after hours, is clearly derived from the similar incident in the *Amores* ascribed to Lucian, a work which no academic syllabus in his day would have included, but which was highly congenial to intellectuals with a homosexual orientation. In *The Longest Journey* the sympathetically presented schoolmaster Jackson advises his young colleague 'Impress on your class that many Greeks and most Romans were frightfully stupid, and if they disbelieve you, read Ctesiphon [*sid*] with them, or Valerius Flaccus.' (165).

She flung her arms up above her head, close together, so that she looked like a slender column. Then her body swayed and her delicate green grass quivered over it with the suggestion of countless leaves.

'My dear child exclaimed her lover. 'No: that is a silver birch,' said Ford. 'Oh, of course. Like this, then.' And she twitched up her skirts so that for a moment they spread out in great horizontal layers, like the layers of a beech (62).

And in the autumn, when the beech-leaves were falling, 'she remained indoors, neither reading nor laughing, and dressing no longer in green, but in brown' (80); and on her last appearance as a woman 'she had changed her brown dress for the old flowing green one, and she began to do her skirt dance in the open meadow, lit by sudden gleams of the sunshine. ... Her feet scarcely moved, but her body so swayed and her dress spread so gloriously around her that we were transported with joy. ... Her garment was as foliage upon her, the strength of her limbs as boughs, her throat the smooth upper branch that salutes the morning or glistens to the rain.' (82)

Considered apart from its ingenious reworking of Ovid, *Other Kingdom* as an autonomous short story has obvious weaknesses in structure and characterization. Entrusting the narrative to one of the minor characters leads to occasional awkwardnesses; for instance, Inskip, the tutor, has both to know, qua omniscient narrator, that a 'secret' notebook kept by Jack Ford contains scurrilous material and later, qua tutor, to be surprised by the book's contents; and at one critical point a private conversation between Harcourt and his fiancée, which takes place out of Inskip's hearing, has to be conveyed by unbelievably articulate body-language:

I saw them meet, and soon she was hanging on his arm. The motion of his hand explained to her the construction of bridges. Twice she interrupted: he had to explain everything again. Then she got in her word, and what followed was a good deal better than a play. Their two little figures parted and met and parted again, she gesticulating, he most pompous and calm. She pleaded, she argued and - if satire can carry half a mile - she tried to be satirical. To enforce one of her childish points she made two steps back. Splash! She was floundering in the little stream. (78-9)

Even if this creaking narrative machinery is overlooked,¹² the reader may feel troubled by two major aspects of the story, the basic implausibility of an engagement between such clearly incompatible persons as Harcourt and Evelyn,¹³ and the element of fantasy which Forster introduces into a realistically depicted situation. To the first of these problems I shall return later. The interpenetration of the realistic by the fantastic, a common feature of Forster's short stories which recurs as a structural element in *A Passage to India*, cannot be shrugged off as a piece of

¹² Seen apparently as a virtue by J.S. Herz in her essay 'The narrator as Hermes' in G.K. Das and J. Beer (edd.) *E.M. Forster: A Human Celebration* (London, 1979) 17-27, esp. 20-21.

¹³ Everyday experience of course offers many examples of such a mismatch, or else we should enjoy the agreeable spectacle of divorce lawyers begging in the streets; but to achieve credibility, Fiction, especially in the severely restricted compass of the short story, needs to avoid the grosser implausibilities routinely perpetrated by Life.

passing whimsy on the part of a youthful writer still feeling his way;¹⁴ Forster was thirty when he published the story, and already the author of two outstandingly successful novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *The Longest Journey*. Moreover, in a much later essay on Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, he proclaimed his predilection for this tantalizing confusion of the Real and the Other: '*Erewhon* also influenced me in its technique. I like that idea of fantasy, of muddling up the actual and the impossible until the reader isn't sure which is which, and I have sometimes tried to do it when writing myself,'¹⁵ Again, in a chapter of *Aspects of the Novel*¹⁶ Significantly devoted to "Fantasy" he quotes with approval this passage from Max Beerbohm's Zuleika Dobson:

Through the square, across the High, down Grove Street they passed. The Duke looked up at the tower of Merton, þl i Üöï õ áÐèđ •ëë• íØí ðái bóçãĩ í. Strange that tonight it would still be standing here, in all its sober and solid beauty - still be gazing, over the roofs and chimneys, at the tower of Magdalen, its rightful bride. Through untold centuries of the future it would stand thus, gaze thus. He winced. Oxford walls have a way of belittling us; and the Duke was loth to regard his doom as trivial.

Aye, by all minerals we are mocked. Vegetables, yearly deciduous, are far more sympathetic. The lilac and laburnum, making lovely now the railed pathway to Christ Church meadow, were all a-swaying and nodding to the Duke as he passed by. 'Adieu, adieu, your Grace,' they were whispering. 'We are very sorry for you, very sorry indeed. We never dared suppose you would predecease us. We think your death a very great tragedy. Adieu! Perhaps we shall meet in another world - that is, if the members of the animal kingdom have immortal souls, as we have.'

The Duke was little versed in their language; yet, as he passed between these gently garrulous blooms, he caught at the least the drift of their salutation, and smiled a vague but courteous acknowledgement, to the right and left alternately, creating a very favourable impression.

In one of the novels he had already published, *The Longest Journey* (1907)¹⁷ the theme of the tree/woman duality in general, and the Daphne story in particular, had played a significant role. In the opening scene, where a group of clever undergraduates are naively discussing metaphysics, Rickie, the hero of the novel, muses:

The great elms were motionless, and seemed still in the glory of midsummer, for the

¹⁴ Contemporary reviewers of *The Celestial Omnibus* too were puzzled by Forster's use of the fanciful: an unsigned notice in the *Daily Telegraph* of 17 May 1911 remarked that 'Mr Forster here writes a little too much for himself, and pays hardly enough attention to the readers who may clamber after him in the darle, and the *Athenaeum* reviewer confessed that 'sometimes we are frankly beaten in our effort to find a meaning, as in "Other Kingdom". It has atmosphere, but what is its significance?'. These and other reviews are conveniently reprinted in *E.M. Forster: The Critical Heritage* ed. P. Gardner (London, 1973).

¹⁵ 'A book that influenced me' (1944), reprinted in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951), cited from Penguin ed. (1965), 226.

¹⁶ The published version of his Clark Lectures (London, 1927); the passage quoted appears on pp. 122-3 of the Penguin edition (1962).

¹⁷ I quote from the 1960 Penguin edition. In addition to the passages cited in the text, c£ P. 156 'How could Rickie, or any one, make a living by pretending that Greek gods were alive, or that young ladies could vanish into trees?'; P. 179 'She disliked him looking out of the window, for all the world as if Nature was some dangerous woman'; p. 198: '...you should read his descriptions of Nature. He agrees with you: says the hills and trees are alive!'

darkness hid the yellow blotches on their leaves, and their outlines were still rounded against the tender sky. Those elms were Dryads - so Rickie believed or pretended, and the line between the two is subtler than we admit. At all events they were lady trees, and had for generations fooled the college statutes by their residence in the haunts of youth. (8)

Again, one of Rickie's favourite haunts is 'a secluded dell, paved with grass and planted with fir-trees',¹⁸ and he visits it both with his male friends and subsequently with the young woman who is later to become his wife, after telling her about a story he has written:

'What I write is too silly. It can't happen. For instance, a stupid vulgar man is engaged to a lovely young lady. He wants her to live in the towns, but she only cares for the woods. She shocks him this way and that, but gradually he tames her, and makes her nearly as dull as he is. One day she has a last explosion - over the snobby wedding-presents - and flies out of the drawing-room window, shouting "Freedom and truth!" Near the house is a little dell full of fir trees, and she runs into it. He comes there the next moment. But she's gone.'

'Awfully exciting. Where?'

'Oh Lord, she's a Dryad!' cried Rickie, in great disgust. 'She's turned into a tree.' (76)

The reactions of other characters - his wife and her brother, his aunt, his half-brother, publishers, and (after his death) the literary world - to the volume of short stories of which the Daphne one is the most important become a major theme in the novel, and the Daphne imagery is recalled over and over again; for example:

'Isn't it odd,' said Mrs Failing, 'that the Greeks should be so enthusiastic about laurels - that Apollo should pursue any one who could possibly turn into such a frightful plant? What do you make of Rickie?'(96)

When Stephen, the uneducated half-brother, takes up Rickie's story in an attempt to answer that question, he is at first mystified, but finds that a previous reader, Rickie's fiancée, has kindly provided a gloss:

What a production! Who was this girl? Where did she go? Why so much talk about trees? 'I take it he wrote it when feeling bad,' he murmured, and let it [the manuscript] fall into the

¹⁸ pp. 23 ' 76 ff. R. Martin, *The Love that Failed.. Ideal and Reality in the Writings of E.M. Forster* (The Hague, 1974) 84 n.2 and E. Heine, in her notes to the Abinger Edition of the novel (London, 1984) 408 point out that in an essay Forster published as an undergraduate he remarks that 'a happy few find the little chalk pit ... where they may wander among the firs and undergrowth, folded off from the outer world' (*Cambridge Review*, I February 1900, p. 18 5) - presumably the 'old chalk pit full of young trees' that Forster mentioned in his journal for May 1898 (see P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life* vol.i [London, 1977]156; but literary archeologists may be further intrigued by an article by Forster's mentor G. Lowes Dickinson on 'Motoring' published in the first issue of the *Independent Review* (October 1903, pp.578-89), a periodical which played an important role in Forster's development (see later). The article begins with a lyrical description of a lake surrounded by trees which immediately suggests Rickie's lake to the modern reader, and includes this purple passage (p. 578): 'The wanderer would have fancied, eluding him among the trunks, the gleam of a Dryad's hair, or, slipping under the wave, the silver shoulder of a nymph.'

gutter. It fell face downwards, and on the back he saw a neat little résumé in Miss Pembroke's handwriting, intended for such as him. 'Allegory. Man = modern civilization (in bad sense). Girl = getting into touch with Nature.'(126)¹⁹

This facile allegorical gloss, attributed within the novel to the unimaginative Agnes Pembroke, obviously does not exhaust the possible interpretations of either Rickie's story or Forster's. It would be possible, for instance, to see *Other Kingdom* as a parable exploring the concepts of possession and enjoyment, legal title and actual use. In support of such a reading one might cite a curious case of Forster's recycling his story in defictionalized form - unless we prefer to see it as a remarkable imitation of *Art by Life*: years later, Forster bought with the profits of *A Passage to India* a small piece of woodland adjacent to his home in Surrey.²⁰ He discusses the problems it gave rise to in an essay entitled 'My Wood':²¹

... What's the effect on me of my wood? In the first place, it makes me feel heavy. Property does have this effect. ... In the second place, it makes me feel it ought to be larger. ... In the third place, property makes its owner feel that he ought to do something to it. Yet he isn't sure what. ... Creation, property, enjoyment form a sinister trinity in the human mind. ... I shall wall in and fence out until I really taste the sweets of property. Enormously stout, endlessly avaricious, pseudo-creative, intensely selfish, I shall weave upon my forehead the quadruple crown of possession until those nasty Bolshies come and take it off again and thrust me aside into the outer darkness.

Even this ironically impassioned sermon on the dangers of property ownership may not be an adequate explanation of *Other Kingdom*. We are faced with a literary problem: why did Forster think it appropriate to publish this piece separately, after he had exploited the Daphne story so extensively as a leitmotif in his ambitious and successful full-scale novel, *The Longest Journey*, published only two years before?²² He must have realised that readers of the novel would, not

¹⁹ Cf. P.M.C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford, 1990) 262: 'The story [of Daphne] ... offered scope for allegory and symbolism.' The high point of the allegorizing tendency is reached in the *Ovide Moralisé* 1. 3065-260, where a series of interpretations is offered, ranging from the naively physical (Daphne, daughter of a river-god, represents cool moisture; Apollo is the sun; their combination causes laurels to flourish) through the euhemeristic (Daphne was an attractive young woman who died from physical effort of escaping her would-be ravisher; she was buried under a laurel tree) to the transcendental and mystical (Daphne becomes the Virgin Mary, and Apollo the Christian God who allows himself to be pierced by the love of humankind; the resulting incarnation does not affect the maiden's virginity).

²⁰ The property, called Piney Copse, consists of four-and-a-half acres of mixed woodland adjacent to Forster's old home at West Hackhurst near Abinger Hammer. It is bisected by a public footpath leading from Beggars Lane to Hackhurst Lane. Forster bequeathed it in his will to the National Trust, and I am grateful to the Trust's officers, in particular to Mr David Kennington, for identifying the wood for me.

²¹ This was first published in 1926, and included in the collection *Abinger Harvest* (1936); 1 quote from the Penguin edition of 1967. On this W. Stone, 'Forster on Profit and Loss' in G.K. Das and J. Beer (edd.), *E.M. Forster: A Human Exploration* (London, 1979) 69-78.

²² It is publication rather than initial composition which is at question here: E. Heine (Abinger edition, p. xvii and 415) points out that Forster was writing the story early in 1905, as his diary entry for 24 February shows. (Even at this point he conceived it as one component of a book of short stories.) She claims that in the novel Forster has simplified the story and adapted its setting to the Madingley dell, but perhaps we are not entitled to assume that the 1905 version was identical with that published in 1909.

unreasonably, recognize the clear affinities between *Other Kingdom* and Rickie's Daphne story.²³ Even in his more fertile early years, Forster could not be accused of publishing to excess, and a comfortable private income cushioned him from any economic pressures,²⁴ not that a short story in a small-circulation periodical could have yielded much material profit. But in fact the stories are far from identical, and given the proximity of the publication of the two versions, the reader's attention is naturally and rightly focused on the differences between them. I cite again Rickie's summary of his story:

'A stupid vulgar man is engaged to a lovely young lady. He wants her to live in the towns, but she only cares for & woods. She shocks him this way and that, but gradually he tames her, and makes her nearly as dull as he is. One day she has a last explosion - over the snobby wedding-presents - and flies out of the drawing-room window, shouting "Freedom and truth!" Near the house is a little dell full of fir-trees, and she runs into it. He comes there the next moment. But she's gone.'

The basic polarity between the man and his fiancée is there, but expressed in terms of a simple opposition between town and woods. The general development of the stories is broadly similar, though Rickie's story is less complex: there is no hint of a third party. The trees in Rickie's wood are firs, as are the trees in the Madingley dell which plays a part in the main narrative of *The Longest Journey*, whereas in *Other Kingdom* they are beeches. Another difference is the issue over which the man and woman disagree: in *Other Kingdom* it is on how to treat the wood, which is itself the wedding-present. Moreover, in *Other Kingdom* the fact that the copse is separated from Harcourt's original estate by a stream (which 'is not crossed by a bridge in the right place' 65) takes on considerable importance. But there is another factor that I have so far passed over: Evelyn Beaumont is Irish. '... Harcourt had picked her out of "Ireland" and had brought her home, without money, without connexions, almost without antecedents, to be his bride' (67); she was the same crude, unsophisticated person that Harcourt had picked out of Ireland - beautiful and ludicrous in the extreme, and - if you go in for pathos - extremely pathetic' (78).

This detail can hardly be a mere piece of gratuitous particularization. It prompts another allegorical interpretation: Harcourt, the smug, grasping entrepreneur, hand in glove with the Established Church,²⁵ who values both art and personal relationships only in so far as they offer the chance of profit,²⁶ and Evelyn, the charming, innocent, fanciful, but penniless ingénue, represent the stereotypes of Britain and Ireland, whose adjacent territories are separated by a narrow but

²³ For example, W.D. Scott, reviewing the stories for the Manchester Guardian, made the identification: see Gardner, op.cit. (n. 14) 172.

²⁴ Nor of course was he subject to the pressures on academics in our day to serve up the same dish of cabbage over and over again with slightly varied dressing in an attempt to appease a Persian chain-gang of government lackeys presuming to measure and grade intellectual Productivity.

²⁵ 'Fancy folk-lore in Hertfordshire! I must tell the Archdeacon: he will be delighted - .' (73)

²⁶ "'The only question is - this Latin and Greek - what will she do with it? Can she ever make anything of it? Can she - well, it's not as if she will ever have to teach it to others.--(7 1) 'She brought him nothing but that he could afford, he had so vast a surplus of spiritual and commercial goods. In time,' I heard him tell his mother, "in time Evelyn will repay me a thousandfold." '(67)

inconvenient stretch of water.²⁷ Significantly, Evelyn's copse is called *Other Kingdom*.²⁸ Harcourt is anxious to bridge this stream, to enclose the two properties with a common fence and lay down civilized paths,²⁹ in short to give physical as well as legal expression to their coming union. Evelyn resists, successfully for a time; and even when her objections are finally overcome by Harcourt's blend of patronizing and bullying, she herself eludes his plans, putting herself for ever beyond his reach.

Before pronouncing on whether this political allegory is a plausible reading of *Other Kingdom*, we need to know Forster's views on the Irish question, then one of the two burning issues in British politics, the other being women's suffrage. Forster seems not to have actually set foot in Ireland before 1912; his accounts of his visit to Belfast in February of that year sound like first-time impressions.³⁰ They were momentous days. He stayed with his close friend and King's contemporary, H.O. Meredith, who had been appointed the previous year to the Chair of Economics at the Queen's University of Belfast.³¹ His visit coincided with those of two more public figures: Christabel Pankhurst was there, tirelessly advocating the cause of women's suffrage;³² overshadowing her was the already bulky figure of Winston Churchill. In any work devoted to the theme of metamorphosis, Churchill deserves honourable mention;³³ at this point in his long and colourful career he was First Lord of the Admiralty in the Liberal government, and he had come to Belfast to commend to a largely sceptical Ulster audience the merits of the government's newly introduced bill for Home Rule for Ireland. Tension was high, and as so often in Ulster, trouble was confidently expected. In the event, Churchill narrowly escaped being lynched in the centre of Belfast, and the meeting he was to address had to be held, not, as planned, in the Ulster Hall, the very citadel of Unionism, where in 1886 his father Lord Randolph Churchill had so memorably proclaimed

²⁷ On the Irish literary tradition representing 'Ireland as woman, and England most often cast in the part of invasive and predatory male', see Declan Kiberd, 'Irish Literature and Irish History' in R.F. Foster (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989) 275-337, esp. 283-7. Yeats's play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902), and other works of the Celtic Revival, may have made this tradition accessible to Forster.

²⁸ Shaw's play *John Bull's Other Island* was first staged on 1 November, 1904, three months before Forster's diary entry referring to *Other Kingdom*. Of course this does not exhaust the significance of the title, which teasingly suggests the vegetable as opposed to the animal kingdom, and the otherness of the supernatural.

²⁹ My colleague Dr M.J. Alden observes acutely that the germ of these "improvements" is already present in Ovid: as the lustful god ogles Daphne's wild beauty, and especially her unkempt hair, he muses *Quid si comantur?* ['What if she had it styled?'] (line 498).

³⁰ It was during this visit that he first met the Belfast novelist Forrest Reid, on whom he published in 1919 a short essay, containing some of his initial impressions of Belfast, which was reprinted in *Abinger Harvest* (London, 1936), and an obituary notice in 1947, reprinted in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (London, 1951).

³¹ Meredith was born in Wimbledon of an Irish father. He occupied the Queer~s chair until his retirement in 1945; he published *Four Dramas of Euripides* (a translation) in 1937. In 1951, at the age of seventy-three, he too (up a position as honorary professor of economics at Magee University College in Londonderry. For his influence on Forster, see P.N. Furbank, E.M. Forster A Life. Volume One: *The Growth of the Novelist* (1879-1914) (London, 1977), esp. 60-63, 97-100; Nicola Beauman, *Morgan, a Biography of E.M. Forster* (London, 1993) plays down the sexual side of their relationship.

³² 'She was able, very clever, and very unpleasant; she talked a certain amount of rot about Indian Women & her idea of progress is that females should meet together in vast masses and orate. But I agreed with most of her remarks, and her tone did not unconvert me.': letter from Forster to Jessica Darling, 6 February 1912, from M. Lago & R.N. Furbank (edd.): *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster*, volume one 1879-1920 (London, 1983) 128.

³³ R.S. Churchill, *Young Statesman: Winston Churchill 1901-1914* (London, 1967) seeks to minimize his father's tergiversations on Home Rule and other questions; for another view, see P. Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front, 1900-1955* (London, 1992).

'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right', but at a football ground in a predominantly Roman Catholic area. Forster himself had evidently promised his mother he would not attend the meeting,³⁴ but was present at the ugly scene beforehand at Churchill's hotel, where he went out of his way to greet Churchill and to chat to Edward Marsh, his private secretary, albeit on incongruously literary matters.³⁵ On paper too, he left no doubt that his sympathies did not lie with the Unionists: in a letter a month later to Malcolm Darling, he wrote:

... Every one says 'wait till I've got what I want: then I'll be patriotic.' But that moment never comes - it is for all human beings at the bottom of the rain bow. - Of course I'm not referring only or mainly to the Suffragists (to whose principles I stick as formerly); but to Orangemen, Syndicalists, emissaries of the National Service League, mistresses who can't stick on Insurance Stamps, &ct. &ct.³⁶

Support for Irish Home Rule was taken for granted in the liberal circles in which Forster moved; for instance, it was one of the articles of the creed proclaimed by the *Independent Review*, a short-lived but influential periodical started by Forster's Cambridge friends and associates, to which he contributed many of his early essays and short stories. (His very first publication, other than ephemeral undergraduate pieces, was the whimsical piece 'Macolnia Shops', which appeared in its first number.) An editorial in April 1905 declared that: 'the only possible solution [to the Irish problem] lies in recognizing the right of the Irish people to manage their own affairs', and made a slighting reference to 'a handful of Orange politicians, who inhabit a small part of Ulster and a large part of the Dublin clubs.' Another editorial the following year is entitled 'The Bankruptcy of Unionism in Ireland'; again in March 1907 the editorial voice affirmed that 'Ireland is destined to be a single whole', and that 'the position of the mass of the English electorate ... is clear. They want Ireland to govern herself.'³⁷

Clearly, there can be no doubt that this proposed political reading of *Other Kingdom* is consistent with Forster's openly expressed sympathies, and those of his circle, with the movement for Irish Home Rule. It would also explain why Forster would publish another version of the Daphne story in 1909:³⁸ this should have focused attention on the differences between the new version and Rickie's story, which are precisely those features (above all Evelyn's Irishness) which prompt my interpretation. In literary terms too, there is a gain: this reading would offer a solution of the single most puzzling problem of the story, the obvious incompatibility of Harcourt Waters and

³⁴ Letter to Jessica Darling, 6 February 1912, printed in *Selected Letters* ed. La o and Furbank (see n. 32 above) 128: could this be a piece of irony ?

³⁵ '(Churchill) came forth ... in grand style, looking very pale - sea kale colour. An enormous crowd outside began to boo, and then the hotel vomited its contents behind him, all booing as well. He brushed against me as he went out: I lifted my hat with great intrepidity.' Letter to his mother dated 9 February 1912, in Lago & Furbank (edd.), *Selected Letters* (see n.32) 130. P.N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: A Life* (see n.31 above) i 214 reports that in the midst of this threatening and noisy crowd Marsh greeted Forster with the question "Have you read Wupert's new poem?"

³⁶ *Selected Letters* (see n.32 above) i 143.

³⁷ After the passage of ninety-four years, a reader in 1999 would be amused - or possibly appalled - by an article in the issue of April 1905 (pp. 284-98), in which Michael Davitt purported to prophesy the events following the setting up of an Irish National Assembly in 19 10: 'One of the first serious measures that had to be taken by the new Government was to protect the right of Orangemen to hold a Twelfth of July celebration in a district of mixed religious population, where serious trouble had been apprehended by the Catholics ...'

³⁸ Not once but twice: see n.9 above.

Evelyn Beaumont. As progressive thinkers of Forster's time saw it, Britain and Ireland had not 'chosen' to form a relationship based on common sentiment and mutual admiration: as a result of the fortuitous workings of history they found themselves sharing the same segment of the globe, in spite of their enormous differences of outlook and temperament. This view is strikingly exemplified in an extract, written in 1912, from the diary of Lowes Dickinson, Forster's guru, quoted without dissent by Forster himself in his biography;³⁹ the very fact that Goldsworthy is concerned with the English in India makes the incidental comparison with the Irish situation, which I have italicized, all the more significant:

For the hardworking and conscientious Anglo-Indians I met I felt a sympathy tinged with a kind of despair. For it seemed almost that the more conscientiously they did their work the further they were from the native sympathy and mind. But that too may be an illusion. *I am however pretty sure that the irony that brought the English into contact with the Indians is only equalled by that which brought them into contact with the Irish. The barrier on both sides of incomprehension is almost impassable.* I feel this incomprehension very strongly myself Indian art, Indian religion, Indian society, is alien and unsympathetic to me. I have no sense of superiority about it, but one of estrangement. What indeed is there or can there be in common between the tradition of Greece and that of India?

Ovid was not the first writer to give the Daphne story a political twist.⁴⁰ In my view, in Other Kingdom Forster re-presented the myth in contemporary political terms, with a distracting admixture of fantasy which has obscured the Irish dimension of its message.⁴¹ Could there be an more apt symbol than Apollo's pursuit of the elusive Daphne for the Act of Union which led to no act of union?⁴²

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³⁹ *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* (London, 1934) 137.

⁴⁰ See my article 'Augustus and Daphne ...' (see n.7 above) 253-4 and n. 16.

⁴¹ This too is not incompatible with Forster's view of Ireland. Cf. his 1919 essay on Forrest Reid (see n.30 above), in which, for example, Belfast 'is haunted by a ghost, by some exile from the realms of the ideal who has slipped into her common sense', 'the Irish mind turns easily to the supernatural when it feels hospitable or tired', and 'the Glens of Antrim, the cliffs near Ballycastle, the dark Mourne Mountains to the south, all ... have the sadness and the sense of unreality that we associate with an indwelling power.'

⁴² A version of this paper was read to a meeting of the Hibernian Hellenists at Maynooth in March 1997, and I thank my auditors for their stimulating reactions.