

‘Let the Poppy Seed Itself and the Carnation  
Mate with the Cabbage’:  
With Hardy and Woolf at *Virginia Woolf Café*  
*Katerina Kitsi-Mitakou*

---

*‘... masterpieces are not single and solitary births’* (ROO 1987:63)

Why would the crazy mating of poppies, cabbages, and carnations in Ramsays’ drawing room (TTL 1998:188) be the only power to defy death and oblivion in section two of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*? ‘[T]he fertility, the insensibility of nature’ (TTL 1998:187) alone saves the whole house from the gigantic chaos of a universe ‘battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust’ (TTL 1998:183). ‘Poppies sowed themselves among dahlias; the lawn waved with long grass; giant artichokes towered among roses; a fringed carnation flowered among the cabbages’ (TTL 1998:187), and to the ‘iterating and reiterating’ ... questions—“Will you fade? Will you perish?” there is always the same persistent reply: ‘we remain’ (TTL 1998:176). Random cross-pollination, like gene diversity, holds the secret to the perpetuation of life. Virginia Woolf’s 1926 novel—displaying perhaps its own survival anxiety—stretches backwards to the turn of the twentieth century to blend with scientific discoveries about the

biological significance of sexual reproduction, which ‘can unite characters by exchange of elements in every possible kind of combination’.<sup>1</sup> This fusion of divergent traits is, geneticists—and Woolf—come to realize, the magical force that helps us adapt ourselves to changing environments; it is our evolutionary victory. But the text, inevitably, is involved in a series of complex intersections. It stretches forward, as well, to meet its sisterly passage in *A Room of One’s Own* in 1928. ‘[B]ooks have a way of influencing each other’ (ROO 1987:104), the young woman writer declares, and explains: ‘masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice’ (1987:63). And, along with another modernist, brotherly passage this time (‘No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone’, T. S. Eliot contends in 1919 in ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’ [1993:2171]), it surpasses the boundaries of modernism, heading towards the notion of a postmodernist intertextuality.

In T. S. Eliot words, ‘what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it’ (1993:2171). Aim of this paper is to use *A Room of One’s Own* as a catalyst in order to explore this productive intertextuality between three different texts: Thomas Hardy’s short story ‘An Imaginative Woman’, Virginia Woolf’s novel *The Years*, and Argiro Mantoglou’s novel *Virginia Woolf Café*. In what ways does Mantoglou’s Greek novel, published in 1999, change its Victorian and modern past? What does this crazy mating of places, times, and voices suggest to the modern reader? How does a Modern Greek writer

read and rewrite, use and abuse Woolf in the light of postmodernism? *Virginia Woolf Café*, I wish to argue, establishes Woolf as the locus of wild polyphonic activity, and at the same time echoes her oscillation between modernist and postmodernist theses. Both Woolf and her Greek successor, Argiro Mantoglou, adopt an ambivalent stance, as their nostalgia for truth, narratives, and meaning in life and texts is undermined by a pastiche of genres, a parody of genders, and the deletion of the boundary between art and life. In a Bakhtinian reading of Mantoglou's novel, centripetal/modernist forces are clearly coexistent with centrifugal/postmodernist ones. The female writer defies, but also regenerates the author; longs for, but also resists creativity; defines herself in terms of gender, but also sets fire to such polarities. In her effort to restore the female poet in Hardy's short story, the woman writer/narrator in Mantoglou's novel gives birth to her own postmodern heroine, who is also the postmodern version of Woolf's Rose Pargiter. The Victorian 'other' is restored by the postmodern writer in the modern space provided by Woolf. In this feminist version of postmodernism, unitary notions of woman are replaced with plural complexity;<sup>2</sup> the woman in ecstatic acceptance incorporates the 'other within' (which is both same and other) and embodies the plurality of unity.

*'...we think back through our mothers'* (ROO 1987:72)

Like the female narrator in *A Room of One's Own*, in her effort to write her book about female writing, Anna, a young woman writer and narrator also in Mantoglou's novel, feels the need to think back through her mothers. She wants to restore the missing links in this vague chain of women writers, and give voice to the unnarrated lives of women

(VWC 1999:15), to the great poet who, in Woolf's words, 'lives in you and me, and in many other women', 'for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences, they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh' (ROO 1987:107-8). One such missing link is Ella Marchmill, 'the imaginative woman' in Thomas Hardy's homonymous short story, a poet who, like Shakespeare's sister, Judith, remains anonymous and dies unheroically as she gives birth to her fourth child. In a fantasy-like way, Mr. Hardy's voice reaches Anna through a public phone, and confesses apologetically and regretfully that Ella was killed by him prematurely, before she was given the chance to speak, because, as he explains, he 'did not have enough ink to follow her' ('δεν έφτανε η μελάνη μου για να την ακολουθήσω' [VWC 1999:13]).<sup>3</sup>

*'... who shall measure the heat and violence of a poet's heart*

*when caught and tangled in a woman's body?'* (ROO 1987:47)

Ella is, indeed, declared by the male narrator of Hardy's story to be 'more than a mere multiplier of her kind' (1992:121), 'bearing children to a commonplace father' (1992:120), a gun manufacturer, responsible for the destruction of life, and, 'possessed by an inner flame' (1992:123), she 'let[s] off her delicate and ethereal emotions in imaginative occupations' (1992:117) such as reading and writing poetry. Like so many other Hardy heroines, however, Ella is sacrificed at the expense of projecting the other.<sup>4</sup> As a poet she is merely the shadow of the acclaimed poet Robert Trewe; she lives in the very same room he used to occupy, reads his books and imitates his style: 'With sad and hopeless envy Ella Marchmill had often and often scanned the rival poet's work, so much

stronger as it always was than her own feeble lines. She had imitated him, and her inability to touch his level would send her into fits of despondency' (1992:121). Ella is so much obsessed by this 'unapproachable master' (1992:123), that she finally, becomes impregnated by his word. As she discovers his poems inscribed 'on the wall-paper behind the curtains at the head of' his—and now her—bed (1992:122), Ella hallucinates a spiritual union of the two, she is 'permeated by his spirit as by an ether' (1992:128), and the child that costs her her life at the end of the story, '[b]y a known but inexplicable trick of nature', bears his genes ('the dreamy and peculiar expression of the poet's face', the hue of his hair, 1992:140). So, despite the fact that Hardy's narrative technique overtly sympathizes with Ella, it finally assumes a male perspective, as it renders the female poet a mere recessive factor, a primitive, instinctive, Darwinian other.

Furthermore, the narrative doesn't simply defer an actual meeting of Ella and the poet, it annuls any such possibility, and what would normally be the climactic moment in the story is transferred to the sphere of the 'imaginary': 'the meeting was stultified. Yet it was almost visible to her in her fantasy even now, though it could never be substantiated' (1992:136). Ella is, after all, for Trewe, and in contrast with Trewe/the *True* poet, an *imaginary* woman: 'undiscoverale, elusive', 'unrevealed, unmet, unwon' (1992:136). At its close, Hardy's short story becomes a rewriting of the nineteenth-century process of hysterization of women, Foucault would agree, according to which female bodies were both sexless and wholly ordered by sex (1984:153). The female poet is entangled in what Freud would have called a nonsensical joke (1986:96), as the two deducible statements taken together exclude each other: she is denied consummation, as the obvious allusion to

an Immaculate Conception renders her a nineteenth century faithful replica of the Madonna, but at the same time she is an adulteress, as the genes of her child testify.<sup>5</sup> And so, she dies.

*'[the great poet] lives in you and me, and in many other women'* (ROO 1987:107)

It is Mr. Hardy's wish in *Virginia Woolf Café* that Ella's half-sketched image would be completed by Anna. Emerging from one of the multiple frames/wallpapers spread throughout Anna's narrative,<sup>6</sup> Ella invades Anna's place and time and invites her (as her name 'Ελλα, the Greek word for 'come', suggests), transfers her back to her attic room or the Victorian house by the lake, where she hides to write her poems undisturbed. Ella embodies for Anna the connecting link between her and a whole series of madwomen writing in the attic; she makes her realize that she, too, is hiding. Not her name, but her pictures, her keys, her papers ('Κρύβω τις φωτογραφίες, τα κλειδιά μου, τα χαρτιά μου', VWC 1999:22), her eyes behind her dark glasses ('Τα μάτια πίσω από τα μαύρα μου γυαλιά', VWC 1999:23), not in an attic, but in a subway, under the earth (VWC 1999:21). She is hiding, because, as she says, she cannot bear to be seen and to be ignored ('Κρύβομαι γιατί δεν αντέχω να φαίνομαι και να μ' αγνοούν', VWC 1999:22). Anna, too, has to fight the angel; only the angel of female kindness has degenerated into a bald, wretched, half-angel with atrophied wings, a 'monotonous, dull prompter'<sup>7</sup> she wouldn't even bother to kill, but one whom she could only pity.

Unlike Hardy's Victorian Ella, Mantoglou's version is given the freedom to resist her creator. She resents being the subject of Anna's ana-tomizing glance, refuses to

mirror her primitive other, and laughs at her attempts to capture the past and define it as eternal present: *‘Πιστεύει πως έχει τη δύναμη να ελέγχει ακόμα και τους περασμένους κόσμους. ... Δεν είμαι η περιγραφή της. Δεν είμαι ο καθρέφτης της. ... φοβάμαι πως στον καθρέφτη της προβάλλει μονάχα το δικό της είδωλο’* (1999:94-95).<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is Anna’s text that gives Ella the freedom to voice her desire to write, a voice to which she re-ascribes its female gender: *‘Η φωνή είναι θηλυκή. ... Τώρα έχω λόγο. Η φωνή είναι ο ΛΟΓΟΣ. Αποτρέπει από το φρόνο. Παύει το θάνατο. Η φωνή είναι δική μου. Ο φόνος δικός σου. Θα πολεμήσω!’* (1999:114).<sup>9</sup> It also provides for her the space to speak her desire for the male poet and experience his loss as a creative pain in her body. In a subversion of the Hardian text, the male poet becomes the sacrificial victim, as it his death that restores Ella’s voice: *‘«Τώρα ξέρω γιατί έπρεπε αυτός να χαθεί. Για να γίνει η απώλεια δική μου αλήθεια. Να τη νιώσω στο σώμα. Τώρα μπορώ να την περιγράψω»’* (1999:127).<sup>10</sup>

In a series of successive reflections, Ella and Anna discover that they are both different and same. Ella longs for her own room/wall on which she will engrave her poems and leave her traces, Anna longs for the fall of all walls (1999:110). Anna’s room/s is/are her body, not her two houses (the one in Greece, the other in England): *‘[Το σπίτι μου δεν είναι] τίποτα άλλο από το σώμα μου, από τα κόκκαλά μου και από τα σπλάχνα μου. Το σώμα μου με περιέχει. Το σώμα μου είναι οι χώροι μου, η σοφίτα είναι το κεφάλι μου, εκεί βρίσκονται όλα τα βιβλία που έχω διαβάσει, όλες οι μνήμες μου. Το σώμα μου είναι το σπίτι μου. Το σώμα μου θυμάται και γνωρίζει’* (1999:101).<sup>11</sup> Anna’s body is the blanket that covers her, the one used and abused by her male lover (1999:28), it is the new red blanket she longs to have, and which, once bought, is abandoned in the middle of the street (1999:32).

Still, despite their differences, both women define poetry as silence.<sup>12</sup> And, faithful to this germ of anonymity, which, as Woolf writes, ‘runs in [women’s] blood’ (ROO 1987:49), they both experience writing as desire and loss at the same time: Ella by never revealing her true identity to the male poet, and Anna by realizing in a moment of Kristevan epiphany that her desire is her loss. Anna refuses to borrow the ‘pen’ of the male author (VWC 1999:13), and defines her presence as an absence in her first attempts to become a writer: [Αννα] Έχω επιθυμία. [ο συγγραφέας] Δεν έχεις ΛΟΓΟ. [Αννα] Έχω νόχτα. [ο συγγραφέας] Δεν έχεις όνομα. [Αννα] Έχω Απώλεια’ (1999:33).<sup>13</sup> And, as Ella, too, experiences her voice springing from her body, she realises that the two female voices must converge: ‘Πρέπει να ζήσει η φωνή μου για να φτάσει τη φωνή εκείνης που με γυρεύει, εκείνης που στρέφει τ’ αυτιά στο παρελθόν και περιμένει απόκριση’ (VWC 1999:115).<sup>14</sup>

*‘Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses’* (ROO 1987:35)

In her effort to transform Mr. Hardy’s mirror into a surface that reflects sameness, Anna is caught up in a series of endless mirrorings. Destined to oscillate between past and present, here and there, as her palindromic and claustrophobic name ‘Anna/annA’ suggests,<sup>15</sup> Anna renews and rebegets herself. She experiences the birth of Emma, her own heroine, who is born miraculously and Phoenix-like out of Anna’s burning manuscripts. If one seeks her traces in the past, Emma echoes the New Woman who rises out of the ashes of the ‘Girl of the Period’ of the late 1860s, and rejects the feminine traits and life which patriarchal society forces upon her, an image with which Hardy heroines have been repeatedly associated. Her modern connections would be Cixous’ Newly Born

Woman (Anna is familiar with and quotes from this text [VWC 1999:17]), this woman born out of her own torn flesh, a woman reborn in/out of her own text:

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me—the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live—that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who?—a feminine one, a masculine one, some? (Cixous 1994:42)

'Ill fated are the authors who know not how to burn their papers', in Bachelard's words, 'for they know all too well that the phoenix-book will not rise from its ashes!' (1990:xxii), 'you must discover the root image of the bird of fire in yourself, in memory, or in your fondest dreams' (1990:37). Emma's instinctive, impulsive nature impersonates, indeed, Anna's inner fire, passion, and, consequently, Ella's desire, too, as we will see. Like Ella, she lives exclusively for the man she loves; unlike Ella, she consummates her desire, occupies not only the room of her lover, but his body also, learns his language and gives words to her passion (*'Δάγκωνα τα χείλη του και έφερα μια μία τις λέξεις στο μυαλό μου. Ένωθα την ιδιαίτερή τους γεύση'* [1999:51], 'Το στόμα του αγαπάω να φιλάω ατέλειωτα. Τα χείλη. Τα χείλη που ακουμπούν οι λέξεις του. Οι λέξεις που ακούω ακόμα κι όταν τις ξεχνάει και όταν τις ξεχνάει αυτός, γίνονται δικές μου' [1999:52]).<sup>16</sup>

But her red hair and her fiery nature cremate the old pattern that identifies woman with body and instinct and defines her as the pale reflection of her sun, as men's magnifying looking glass. Emma escapes the procreative maze in which Ella is trapped, but also revolts against being one of Anna's experiments, one more heroine in love

(VWC 1999:69), she refuses even to be Anna's mirror to her primitive past. 'ΤΙΠΕΠΙΕΙ ΝΑ ΦΥΤΩ. Δεν μπορεί κανείς να με βοηθήσει. Ούτε και εκείνη που με γράφει' (VWC 1999:75),<sup>17</sup> Emma exclaims, and transforming her flesh back into flames again smothers the body of her male lover and turns it into ashes:

*Στην αχή είδα το δέρμα να ροδίζει και σχεδόν αμέσως έγινε ερυθρό. Κόκκινο υγρό άρχισε να τρέχει απ' όλους τους πόρους μου. Δεν ήταν αίμα, ήταν φωτιά. Η ανάσα μου έπαιρνε χρώμα, κόκκινο. Έβλεπα μικρές πύρινες φλόγες να βγαίνουν απ' το σώμα μου. Με μια μικρή κίνηση όρμησαν απ' τα χέρια μου δυο φλόγες. Σε λίγο απ' όλο το σώμα μου έτρεχε η φωτιά, προς κάθε κατεύθυνση. Να κάψει. Δεν μπορούσα πια να την ελέγξω. Το σώμα μου χάθηκε μεσ' στη φωτιά μου. ... Τον σκέπασε μια φλόγα μεγαλύτερη από μένα. Τον αφάνησε τ οβασικό μου στοιχείο. (VWC 1999:76-78)<sup>18</sup>*

“‘Chloe liked Olivia’” (ROO 1987:78)

Being the product of asexual reproduction, the ultimate symbol of self-generation, a mere clone of herself, Emma, too, is threatened with extinction. Her only salvation would be to seek for a maternal genealogy. And this is the point at which a master text in English literature, like *The Years*, needs an ‘other’ to construct itself, as much as this ‘other’ may define itself solely in relation to its past.<sup>19</sup> Emma is both Anna's prehistory in the sense that she embodies her impulsive, intuitive part (‘εγώ είμαι εσύ σε άλλη στιγμή’ [VWC 1999:70]),<sup>20</sup> and Rose Pargiter's posterity. Emma's and Rose's identical genes, evident not only in their red hair, but also in their ‘flaming heart’, I wish to argue, are the embodiment of the feminist postmodern. This fruitful intertextuality of Emma and Rose is both complicit and disruptive, it both decenters/challenges unitary conceptions of time,

identity, narrative and projects a merging, healing aspect of self, history and texts. The origins of Anna's genes can, after all, be traced in Anna O., Breuer's patient, and godmother of the 'talking cure', a technique that was adopted and further developed by Breuer himself. It is Anna O. who first discovers the healing powers of giving utterance to hallucinations; 'she would lose all her obstinacy' (Breuer 1986:83), her hysterical symptoms would disappear as soon as they are 'talked away' (Breuer 1986:88-89). Chloe did like Olivia, this wished for friendship between two women by the narrator in *A Room of One's Own* is a possible scenario, and so, Emma will narrate Rose's trauma.

Virginia Woolf's postmodernist tendencies are a field already explored by a variety of scholars.<sup>21</sup> *The Years* has been read as a novel more about '[r]epression, rather than expression' (Gottlieb 1983:218), permeated by a sense of meaninglessness (Kurz 1990:98), and a silence that represents the 'demise of civilization' (Kurz 1990:96). According to Jane Marcus, Woolf 'deconstructed and disemboweled the novel herself', as its earlier form, *The Pargiters*, testifies, and readers have to become 'pargetters, patching up and plastering together the fictional and factual parts of the text' (1987:52-53). Meanwhile, the uncertainty of narrative structures in the novel, the echoing voices, the lack of centering perspectives, are, as Pamela L. Caughie has argued, indicative of a postmodernist discourse.

One of the most striking silences in *The Years*, or 'blanks', as Orlando's biographer would call them (O 1998:242), is Rose Pargiter's sexual initiation on the very night of her mother's death. Rose Pargiter the elder, having exploited her reproductive potential, dies in a sterilized room, or is discarded rather by Victorian evolutionary

narratives as useless. The farcical nature of the death of the mother (Colonel Pargiter has already replaced his dying wife with his young mistress; her daughter Delia thinks of her as ‘an impediment to all life’ [TY 1988:19]) and the simultaneous sexual attack on her double, her daughter, clearly illustrate the violence and absurdity of Victorian sexuality, both inside the family, and out in the street. The young Rose may not have realized yet that the family is ‘the crystal in the deployment of sexuality’, ‘the germ of all the misfortunes of sex’ (Foucault 1984:111); for, her father’s claws, the ‘shiny knobs of the mutilated fingers’, that had only a couple of hours ago been fumbling around his mistress’s neck, are for her a fascinating sight (TY 1988:13).

It is out in the street, that Rose comes to realize the real, predatory face of male sexuality. The horrid, ‘pock-marked man’ (TY 1988:23) that sucked his lips in and out and exposed himself to Rose is one of the many exhibitionist cases, the number of which rose dramatically in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and accounted for the birth of this new term.<sup>22</sup> In her numerous efforts throughout the novel to speak out her traumatic experience, Rose is, however, hindered by the ellipses of the text: ‘“I saw ...” Rose began. She made great effort to tell [Eleanor] the truth; to tell her about the man at the pillar-box. “I saw ...” she repeated’ (TY 1988:34). Ellipses, that, of course, ‘in Woolf’s novels and other works of the time mark the silences of a culture about sex’, as Patricia Lawrence Ondek claims in her study on Woolf’s silences (1991:108). But the text’s truth hides in its silences, it is its margins, its gaps that constitute it. Its phenotype is not necessarily a picture of the underlying genotype. Any modern geneticist would ascertain

this postmodern discovery, which is nothing but an echo of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mendelian laws.

How is then Rose's unpronounced trauma to be read? This very same act that victimizes Rose and brings her in direct confrontation with the dominance of the phallus, ('the oval white shape hung in front of her dangling' in Rose's dream [TY 1988:32]), encompasses its self-annihilation. The man who exposes himself has been viewed by sexologists as a 'pervert' in the sense that he renders himself 'a passive spectacle for the female gaze' (Nye 1999:183). So, Rose's trauma is equivocal: she is both forced to conform to the patriarchal politics of gazing and allowed to subvert it. Rose's stance throughout *The Years* is likewise equivocal. She is the inheritor of the family's military potential ('She ought to have been a soldier, Eleanor thought. She was exactly like the picture of old Uncle Pargiter of Pargiter's Horse', 1988:121), a Victorian soldier who is transformed into an active feminist. Rose identifies with patriarchal strengths in order to turn them against patriarchal family life, Clare Hanson asserts us in her study of the issue of gender in *The Years*. 'Rose of the flaming heart; Rose of the burning breast; Rose of the weary world—red, red Rose!' (TY 1988:127), her cousin Sara calls her.<sup>23</sup> This cross-pollination of roses, part of the old tradition that assigns to women a vegetal existence, renders Rose both the object of the poet's desire, a passive receiver—as in Robert Burns 'A Red, Red Rose'—and an active fighter, as the allusion to Richard Crashaw's poem 'The Flaming Heart: Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphicall Saint Teresa' (1979:1652) suggests.

Crashaw's poem is, in all probability, his criticism on Bernini's statue 'The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa' (Figures 1 and 2),<sup>24</sup> a visual representation of the old myth of the sexual saint. 'You only have go back and look at Bernini's statue in Rome to understand immediately that she's coming', Lacan assures us in 'God and the *Jouissance* of The Woman' and continues: 'what is her *jouissance*, her *coming* from? It is clear that the essential testimony of the mystics is that they are experiencing it but know nothing about it' (1982:147). Still, if we go back to Crashaw's 17<sup>th</sup> century reading of the statue we discover a different answer to Lacan's question. 'You must transpose the picture quite / And spell it wrong to read it right; / Read *him* for *her* and *her* for *him*' (ll 9-11, emphasis in the original), the poet advises, 'Since his the blushes be, and hers the fires, / ... / Give him the veil, give her the dart' (ll 38, 42). It is only through this act of cross-gendering (the Victorian Angel has once again been degendered, his male sex this time is feminized, as he is rendered passive) that the reader may understand that Saint Teresa's total absorption in a fleshly experience derives from a fire that burns within her, is not, as Bernini's statue proposes ignited by the seraph's dart.

Like her writings,<sup>25</sup> which Irigaray has interpreted as tales of ecstatic escape (1985:201), her 'flaming heart' challenges Christianity, the very same locus it derives from; it is a release from predetermined gender roles, a flight from grand narratives. Saint Teresa's wound is the source of her power, for, as Crashaw continues: 'in love's field was never found / A nobler weapon than a wound. / Love's passives are his activ'st part, / The wounded is the wounding heart' (ll 71-74). The allusion to a different set of wounds is clear here, 'The wounds from the nails that pierce his body as he hangs there', which

along with ‘his nakedness, open for all to see’ and ‘his virgin flesh’ make the Son ‘the most female of men’, as Irigaray writes in ‘*La Mystérique*’ (1985:199-200). And she concludes, ‘if the Word was made flesh in this way, and to this extent, it can only have been to make me (become) God in my jouissance, which can at last be recognized’ (1985:200).

Although Rose Pargiter’s thirst for action in *The Years* finally takes the form of a series of self-violation acts (she continuously suppresses her traumatic childhood memory, she cuts her wrist with a knife, she is taken to prison for throwing a brick),<sup>26</sup> which are hardly redeeming, Sara Pargiter’s rose pastiche is telling a different story. With the use of Sara’s stylised speech and repetition of acts Woolf manages to deconstruct gender polarities, and open up the possibility of gender transformation, as Clare Hanson has shown in her article on compulsory heterosexuality in *The Years*. Furthermore, her emphasis on a discourse of the rose, a flower, which, Derrida has claimed in *Glas* (in his analysis of Genet’s flowers), ‘defoliates, decomposes endlessly, analyzes itself’ (1986:18), renders Rose Pargiter both the construction and the deconstruction of the Victorian rose.

If, like all flowers, the rose is an ‘incessantly instantaneous reversal: penis/vagina, castration/virginity, erection/relapse, natural organism/disarticulated artifact, total body proper/fetishized morsel’ (Derrida 1986:126), if it can play ‘the part of a counter-poison poison’ (Derrida 1986:53), then Rose, symbol of postmodernist deconstruction, is both the embodiment of the Angel in the House, of Ella Marchmill, the dead metaphor in Hardy’s short story, and its violent destruction. The flaming Rose Pargiter, who is

actually embodied in the postmodern Emma, sets fire to the body of her male lover and breaks free from gender polarities. Unlike Antigone's incestuous, recycled genes that may be a challenge to patriarchy, are, however, due to extinction, Emma's blood carries a mixture of genes which defy death. Emma's blood ( $\alpha\iota\mu\alpha$  is the Greek word for blood) turns into an uncontrollable fire that springs from within, like St Teresa's ecstasy, a fire both destructive and relieving. She is another version of the Phoenix myth: the woman burns in her own ambivalent fire and regenerates herself—a self-destructive/self-constructive fire.

*'... a great mind is androgynous'* (ROO 1987:94)

As twentieth-century geneticists discover the “‘principle of duality’”: that every being is a double being, inheriting one part from its mother and the other half from its father’ (Nye 1999:214) and realise that sexual reproduction (an individual contributes only half of her or his genes to the next generation) is our weapon for fighting destructive parasites and gene defects,<sup>27</sup> Woolf declares in *A Room of One's Own* that like babies, ‘Poetry ought to have a mother as well as a father’ (1987:98). Bodies, flowers, minds must be a mixture of genes and genders: ‘It is when this fusion takes place that the mind is fully fertilised and uses all its faculties’ (ROO 1987:94). Searching for a maternal genealogy does not necessitate killing the father. Only, the puffed up image in the mirror is now reduced to its real, earth-like dimensions. The father is demystified and domesticated.

The ‘Great Victorian’ figure of Mr. Hardy (D3 1982:100), the link between Woolf and her Victorian father,<sup>28</sup> the writer who, as Woolf’s diaries, letters and essays testify, was not only respected and admired by her, but with whom she identified,<sup>29</sup> returns in 1999 to seek for the help of the female writer. Mr. Hardy’s Victorian voice, fragmented though it may be reaching us through the telephone, is willing to provide answers to all those questions that had been asked by Woolf during her 1926 visit to him, and had been hanging loose since then.<sup>30</sup> He is allowed to suggest that Anna’s heroine, Emma, may be recovered by dis/recovering Ella’s ‘unpresentable’ poems, the ‘unpresentable’ text, in Lyotard’s terminology,<sup>31</sup> which constitutes the gap not only in Hardy’s short story, but in Mantoglou’s novel too.

‘Virginia Woolf Café’ is in the novel the actual Russell Square Café, which makes Anna nostalgic of Victorian innocence, and of the Greek sea:

*Περιμένα τη Μαρία, φίλη μου παλιά απ’ την Ελλάδα. Κι οι δυο ‘ξενιτεμένες’ συναντιόμασταν εκεί κάθε Σάββατο στρεις και πηγαίναμε για καφέ στο Virginia Woolf Café, παραδοσιακό λονδρέζικο στέκι, με όλη την αίγλη της εκπεσούσης αυτοκρατορίας. Εκεί βυθιζόμασταν στις δερμάτινες πολυθρόνες και σερβίραμε τον καφέ μας στις πορσελάνινες κούπες κάτω από το βλέμμα της κυρίας του Bloomsbury.<sup>32</sup> (1999:81-82)*

*‘Νοσταλγώ τη θάλασσα’.<sup>33</sup> (1999:84)*

It is, at the same time, the metaphorical locus that revolutionizes the past, both Victorian and Modern. The time of the novel becomes the eternal present, the setting of the novel becomes the trees, the waters, the sea (VWC 1999:136), and Anna’s speech, as her faces

multiply, becomes an echo of Molly Bloom's endless affirmation in her final monologue of *Ulysses* : 'Μια αιώνια μορφή. Με όλα τα πρόσωπα της ζωής και με το σώμα της το ερωτικό. Την ακούω, ΝΑΙ. Η κατάφαση είναι η κόρη της Φωνής. Κόκκινη όπως ο ορίζοντας. ... Κι όλο πάμε. ... Τώρα μας κυνηγούνε τα πουλιά. Ανάμεσα στα χέρια μας κρύβουμε σπόρους—χάδια. Ένα σύννεφο μας τυλίγει. Κόκκινο. Ακούω τη φωνή του ήλιου κι αποκρίνομαι: ΝΑΙ, ΝΑΙ, ΝΑΙ.' (VWC 1999:136-37).<sup>34</sup>

In this *mise en abyme* of female writers, Woolf provides the sea, the waters, the uterine space that receives a diversity of genes, and safeguards literary production, she is the catalytic power that unites past and present, England and Greece, the male poet and the female author. The Voyage out is a Voyage in, in the sense that Anna's traveling back in time and space helps her recover the 'other within'. In Cixous' words:

Writing is working; being worked; questioning (in) the between (letting oneself be questioned) of same *and of* other without which nothing lives; undoing death's work by willing the togetherness of one-another, infinitely charged with a ceaseless exchange of one with another—not knowing one another and beginning again from what is most distant, from self, from other, from the other within. A course that multiplies transformations by the thousands. (1994:43)

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI,  
GREECE

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cited in ‘Variation and Evolution’, excerpt from John Farley’s book *Gametes & Spores: Ideas about Sexual Reproduction, 1750-1914* (1982, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP) in Nye (1999:214).

<sup>2</sup> In her discussion of feminism and its relation to postmodernism, Patricia Waugh speaks of a ‘postmodernist’ conception of subjectivity in feminist writing, the tendency to construe ‘human identity in terms of relationship and dispersal, rather than as a unitary, self-directing, isolated ego’ (1989:12), and classifies Woolf among the first feminist writers that pointed out ‘the inauthenticity and the danger, for women’, in believing that ‘there might be a “natural” or “true” self which may be discovered through lifting the misrepresentations of an oppressive social system’ (1989:13).

<sup>3</sup> Excerpts from Virginia Woolf *Café* that are quoted in this paper have been translated by me.

<sup>4</sup> In her article ‘Thomas Hardy and Matters of Gender’, Kristin Brady’s summarises a number of critics that deal with the issue of how femininity is presented in Hardy, and tends to agree with those that support the view that despite the fact that Hardy transcends the gender stereotypes of his time, his female characters still remain enmeshed in a sexist narrative.

<sup>5</sup> For Orlando’s involvement in a similar nonsensical joke concerning her sexuality see my discussion of the novel in Chapter 4 of *Feminist Readings of the Body in Virginia Woolf* (1997:130-32).

<sup>6</sup> This strange typography of the text is indicative of the manifold narrative planes in the novel; it manifests Mantoglou’s effort to accommodate a sequence of diverse texts/thoughts/writers/characters. Yet, the actual frames on the page fail to serve as boundaries; subject to a literal endosmosis, the distinctions between inside and outside are blurred.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Εμεινε ένας ερμαφροδίτης. Κακομοίρης. ... Ταλαίπωρος, ημιάγγελος, φαλακρός με ατροφικά φτερά και μέλη. ... κι εγώ συνυπάρχω μ’ έναν μονότονο και πληγτικό υποβολέα’ (VWC 1999:25).

<sup>8</sup> ‘*She thinks she has the power to control even the past worlds. ... I am not her description. I am not her mirror. ... I’m afraid her mirror projects only her own image*’ (1999:94-95).

<sup>9</sup> ‘*Voice is female’ ... Now I have speech. Voice is SPEECH. It prevents death. It stops death. Voice is mine. Death is yours. I will fight!*’ (1999:114).

<sup>10</sup> ‘“Now I know why he had to die. So that the loss would become my truth. So that I could feel it in my body. Now I can speak of it”’ (1999:127).

<sup>11</sup> ‘[my house is] *nothing but my body, my bones, my entrails. My body contains me. My body is my spaces, the attic is my head, where all the books I have read are, all the memories. My body is my house. My body remembers and knows*’ (1999:101).

<sup>12</sup> ‘ «Και πώς μιλούνε οι ποιητές;» ρώτησε κοιτάζοντάς με με δυσπιστία. «Μιλούνε με τη σιωπή τους.» «Πάντα αυτό έκαναν». (“How do poets speak?” she asked looking at me in disbelief. “They speak with their silence”. “That’s what they’ve always been doing”’, 1999:103).

<sup>13</sup> ‘[Anna] I have desire. [Male writer] You don’t have SPEECH. [Anna] I have night. [Male writer] You don’t have NAME. [Anna] I have Loss’ (1999:33).

<sup>14</sup> ‘My voice must live, so that it will reach the voice of the one who is after me, the one whose ears turn to the past and wait for reply’ (VWC 1999:115).

<sup>15</sup> The prefix ‘ana’ in Greek words denotes (this is something Janet Case, her Greek teacher, would have taught Virginia Woolf): ‘in place or time, back, again, anew’ (*The Oxford Universal Dictionary*). Seen in this light, *Virginia Woolf Café* is an anamnesis (reminiscence), an anatomy, an anarchic (disorderly) anamorphosis (reformation), of Hardy and Woolf.

<sup>16</sup> 'I would bite his lips and the words would come to my mouth one by one. I could feel their special taste' (1999:51), 'I love to kiss his mouth incessantly. The lips. The lips where his words rest. His words that I hear even when he forgets them, and when he forgets them, they become MINE' (1999:52).

<sup>17</sup> 'I MUST GO. No one can help me. Not even the she who writes me' (VWC 1999:75).

<sup>18</sup> 'First I saw my flesh turning pink and then red. Red fluid was running out of all my pores. It wasn't blood, it was fire. My breath was turning red. I could see small burning flames springing from my body. Two flames rushed out of my hands. Soon, fire was rushing out of my whole body, in all directions. To burn. I couldn't control it any more. My body was lost in my fire. ... A flame bigger than me covered him. My basic element destroyed him' (VWC 1999:76-78).

<sup>19</sup> What comes to mind here is Spivak's rereading of *Jane Eyre* through Jean Rhys' spectrum of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Rhys' revision of Bertha Mason helps Spivak read *Jane Eyre* as an allegory of the violence of imperialism (1996:139).

<sup>20</sup> 'I am you at some other moment' (VWC 1999:70).

<sup>21</sup> Beth Carole Rosenberg, for example, in her discussion of Woolf's perception of a 'postmodern literary history', makes references to Woolf's focus on 'the pastness of the presence', her 'belief in anonymous authorship and the denial of individual expression' (2000:1114), her emphasis on the 'dialogic relation between reader and writer' (2000:1115), and also her conviction that fictional construction is always an indispensable part of a historical narrative (2000:1120).

<sup>22</sup> The term 'exhibitionist' was used for the first time by the French doctor Charles Lasègue in 1877. The rise in the number of such cases was so threatening that magistrates finally turned for help to doctors ('Exhibitionism and Deviance', excerpt from Angus McLaren's book *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* [1997, Chicago UP] in Nye 180-81).

<sup>23</sup> In what seems to be a pastiche of phrases that derive mainly from 19<sup>th</sup> century poetry, Sara keeps defining Rose in relation to such old motifs throughout the novel: 'withered Rose, spiky Rose, tawny Rose, thorny Rose' (1988:145), 'Red Rose, tawny Rose ... wild Rose, thorny Rose' (1988:177), 'Red Rose,

thorny Rose, brave Rose, tawny Rose' (1988:320). The 'thorny rose' image, for example, appears repeatedly in Christina Rossetti (in 'A Rose Plant in Jerico', 'Maiden Song', and 'Brandon's Both'), in Ella Wheeler Wilcox's 'Maurine' (1917), in *Jane Eyre* (Vol II, Ch. 10), in Jean Ingelow's 'A Mother Showing the Portrait of her Child' (1888), in Alfred Bunn's 'Song of the Nymph' (1819), in Anna Seward's 'A Warning Exhortation' (1810). The 'withered rose' is found again in Christina Rossetti's [O Lord, when Thou didst call me didst Thou know], in R. Bridges [Poor withered rose and dry] (1844-1930); the 'brave rose' in William H.C. Hosmer's 'Love's Star' (1854) and George Herbert's 'Church-rents and Schisms' (1633); the 'tawny withered rose' in Michael Field's drama *Callirrhoe* (1884). The 'rose of the world' is apparently a favourite 19<sup>th</sup> century motif, as a number of poems testify; for example, Richard Watson Gilder's 'To Rosamond' (1908), Robert Stephen Hawker's 'Translation of an Epitaph on Rosa' (1899), William Sharp's 'The Rose of Flame' (1910), Phoebe Cary's 'The Prize' (1882), Tennyson's drama *Becket* (1907-8), and Coventry Patmore's 'The Angel in the House' (1906). Finally, Y. B. Yeat's first line in 'To the Rose upon the Rood of Time' ('Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days!') seems to have provided Sara with the syntactic pattern upon which she weaves her rose collection.

<sup>24</sup> Although Gian Lorenzo Bernini's statue was placed and unveiled in the church of Santa Maria Della Vittoria in Rome after Crashaw's death, one may assume that Crashaw may have heard about the statue or seen it in Bernini's studio, as what he writes in his poem applies perfectly to Bernini's statue (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1, 1979:1343).

<sup>25</sup> Ciriaco Morón-Arroyo has written about the vitality of Saint Teresa's writings, her effort to 'combine contemplation with action' (1987:402), and challenge the passive role of women in both society and Church (1987:410): 'She had an exemplary sense of freedom, gave a new impulse to religious life and mystical literature'; by avoiding 'abstract doctrine in favor of events; she avoids concepts and tries to be understood through images' (1987:405).

<sup>26</sup> In one of her rare moments of confidentiality Rose confesses to her sister: "'I dashed into the bathroom and cut out this gash"'—she held out her wrist. Eleanor looked at it. There was a thin white scar

just above the wrist joint. ... Rose had locked herself into the bathroom with a knife and cut her wrist' (1988:122).

<sup>27</sup> The cytologist Hugo de Vries elaborated on this idea in his paper 'Befruchtung und Bastardierung' which was read at the 1903 meeting of the Dutch Society of Science (Nye 1999:214).

<sup>28</sup> 'Dear Mr. Hardy', Woolf writes in her letter to Hardy on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1915, 'I have long wished to tell you how profoundly grateful I am to you for your poems and novels, but naturally it seemed an impertinence to do so. When however, your poem to my father, Leslie Stephen, appeared in *Satires of Circumstance* this autumn, I felt that I might perhaps be allowed to thank you for that at least. That poem, and the reminiscences you contributed to Professor Maitland's Life of him, remain in my mind as incomparably the truest and most imaginative portrait of him in existence, for which alone his children should be always grateful to you. But besides this one would like to thank you for the magnificent work which you have already done, and are still to do. The younger generation, who care for poetry and literature, owe you an immeasurable debt, and in particular for your last volume of poems which, to me at any rate, is the most remarkable book to appear in my lifetime' (L2 1978:58).

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Woolf's adoption of Hardy's phrase 'moments of vision' and her adaptation of it into 'moments of being' (D3 1982:105), her sharing his belief that a novel 'is an impression, not an argument' (CR 1986:254), her characterization of him as 'the greatest tragic writer among English novelists' (CR 1986:254). 'As for Thomas Hardy', she writes to Lytton Strachey in 1912, 'he's a great man; his style is not made to fit, but what of that? If we had but his ribs, his thighs, his stomach and his entrails!' (L1 1977:498).

<sup>30</sup> '[N]othing would induce him [Hardy] to talk about his books', Woolf writes to Violet Dickinson shortly after her and Leonard's visit to Max Gate, Hardys' house at Dorchester (L3 1980:283). For more details about this visit see Woolf's entry of 25<sup>th</sup> July 1926 (D3 1982:96-101).

<sup>31</sup> 'The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself' (1992:149).

<sup>32</sup> 'I was waiting for Maria, my old friend from Greece. Both of us away from home would meet every Saturday at three and have coffee at Virginia Woolf Café, a traditional London Café, with all the glory of the fallen empire. We would dive ourselves into the leather armchairs and serve our coffee in porcelain mugs under the gaze of the Bloomsbury lady' (1999:81-82).

<sup>33</sup> 'I am homesick of the sea' (1999:84).

<sup>34</sup> 'An eternal figure. With all the faces of life and a loving body. I can hear her, YES. Affirmation is the daughter of Voice. Red like the horizon. ... We keep going. ... Now the birds are after us. In our hands we hide seeds—caresses. A cloud envelopes us. Red. I can hear the voice of the sun and answer: YES, YES, YES' (VWC 1999:136-37).

## REFERENCES CITED

Bachelard, Gaston

1990 *Fragments of A Poetics of Fire*. Edited by Suzanne Bachelard. Translated by Kenneth Haltman. The Dallas Institute Publications.

Brady, Kristin

1999 'Thomas Hardy and Matters of Gender'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*. Edited by Dale Kramer. Cambridge UP. 93-111.

Breuer, Joseph

1986 'Case 1: Fräulein Anna O.' In *Studies on Hysteria* by Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer. Edited by James and Alix Strachey, and Angela Richards. Translated by James and Alix Strachey. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Cixous, Hélène

1994 'Sorties'. In *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. Edited by Susan Sellers.  
Translated by Betsy Wing. London: Routledge.

Caughie, Pamela L.

1991 *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature in Quest and Question of Itself*. Urbana: U of Illinois P.

Crashaw, Richard

1979 'The Flaming Heart: Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphicall Saint Teresa'. In *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Edited by M. H. Abrams. Vol. 1, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. NY: Norton. 1343-46.

Derrida, Jacques

1986 *Glas*. Translated by John P. Leavy, Jr and Richard Land. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1986.

Eliot, T. S.

1993 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. In *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Edited by M. H. Abrams. Vol. 2, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. NY: Norton. 2170-76.

Foucault, Michel

1984 *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol. 1. Translated by Robert Hurley. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Freud, Sigmund

1986 *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Translated by James Strachey.  
Edited by Angela Richards. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Gottlieb, Laura Moss

1983 'The Years: A Feminist Novel'. In *Virginia Woolf: Centennial Essays* by E. Ginsberg and Laura Moss Gottlieb. Troy, NY: Whitston. 215-29.

Hanson, Clare

1997 'In the House of Love: Compulsory Heterosexuality in *The Years*'. *Journal of Gender Studies* 6 (1): 55-63.

Hardy, Thomas

1992 'An Imaginative Woman'. In *Selected Works*. London: Everyman. 116-140.

Hutcheon, Linda

1989 *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Irigaray, Luce

1985 'La Mystérique'. In *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell UP. 191-202.

Kitsi-Mitakou, Katerina K.

1997 *Feminist Readings of the Body in Virginia Woolf's Novels*. Thessaloniki.

Kurz, Marilyn

1990 *Virginia Woolf: Reflections and Reverberations*. NY: P. Lang.

Lacan, Jacques

1982 'God and the *Jouissance* of The Woman'. In *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*. Edited by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose. Translated by Jacqueline Rose. London: Macmillan. 137-48.

Lawrence, Patricia Ondek

1991 *The Reading of Silence: Virginia Woolf in the English Tradition*. Stanford UP.

Lyotard, Jean-François

1992 'Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism?'. In *Modernism/Postmodernism*. Edited by Peter Brooker. Translated by Regis Durand. London: Longman. 139-50.

Mantoglou, Argyro

1999 Αργυρώ Μαντόγλου, *Virginia Woolf Café*. Athens: Apopira. [VWC]

Marcus, Jane

1987 'The Years as Götterdämmerung, Greek Play, and Domestic Novel'. In *The Languages of Patriarchy*. Bloomington, Indiana UP. 36-56.

Morón-Arroyo, Ciriaco

1987 'Saint Teresa of Jesus: The Human Value of the Devine'. In *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*. Edited by Katharina M. Wilson. Athens & London: U of Georgia P. 401-31.

Nye, Robert A, ed.

1999 *Sexuality*. Oxford UP.

Rosenberg, Beth Carole

2000 'Virginia Woolf's Postmodern Literary History'. *MLN* 115 (5): 1112-30.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty

- 1996 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism'. In *A Practical Reader in Contemporary Literary Theory*. Edited by Peter Brooker and Peter Widdowson. London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf. 132-143.

Waugh, Patricia

- 1989 *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern*. London: Routledge.

Woolf, Virginia

- 1998 *To the Lighthouse*. Ed. Margaret Drabble. Oxford UP. [TTL]
- 1988 *The Years*. London: Triad Grafton, 1988. [TY]
- 1987 *A Room of One's Own*. London: Triad Grafton, 1987. [ROO]
- 1998 *Orlando*. Ed. Rachel Bowlby. Oxford UP, 1998. [O]
- 1977 *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 1: 1888-1912*. Eds. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. [L1]
- 1978 *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 2: 1912-1922*. Eds. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. [L2]
- 1980 *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3: 1923-1928*. Eds. Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautmann. NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. [L3]
- 1982 *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3: 1925-30*. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell & Andrew McNeillie. Harmondsworth: Penguin. [D3]
- 1986 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy'. In Andrew McNeillie (ed.) *The Common Reader*. London: Hogarth. 245-257. [CR]



Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing-room, and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. Let the broken glass and the china lie out on the lawn and be tangled over with grass and wild berries. For now had come that moment, that hesitation when dawn trembles and night pauses, when if a feather alight in the scale it will be weighed down. Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing-room, and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. Let the broken glass and the china lie out on the lawn and be tangled over with grass and wild berries. Attended with the creaking of hinges and the screeching of bolts, the slamming and banging of damp-swollen woodwork, some rusty laborious birth seemed to be taking place, as the women, stooping, rising, groaning, singing, slapped and slammed, upstairs now, now down in the cellars. Oh, they said, the work! From Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*: Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing-room, and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. Let the broken glass and the china lie out on the lawn and be tangled over with grass and wild berries. If there are such things as universal truths about how we experience life, "time passes" is one of them. (I'd suggest its harsher relative "everybody dies" as another.)