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Virginia Woolf, Modernity and History Constellations with Walter Benjamin

Angeliki Spiropoulou

Angeliki Spiropoulou holds a PhD from the University of Sussex, UK. She is Lecturer in Modern European Literature and Theory at the University of the Peloponnese, Greece. Her recent publications include: *Culture Agonistes: Debating Culture, Rereading Texts* (co-editor, Bern 2002); *Contemporary Greek Fiction: International Orientations and Crossings* (co-editor, Athens 2002); *Walter Benjamin: Images and Myths of Modernity* (editor, Athens 2007) and *History of European Literature: 18th–20th C* (co-author, Patras 2008).

This book analyses the representation of the past and the practice of historiography in both the fiction and the critical writings of Virginia Woolf. It argues for a critical historiography, distinct from the conventional assumptions of history writing, to be found in Woolf's essays and fiction, and links her historiographical imagination with Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history and associated theory of modernity along certain dialectical motifs and emblematic figures. Setting 'in constellation' the ideas of Woolf and Benjamin on the relationship between the past and the present, it inquires into the intersections of Woolf's literary modernism with (feminist) politics and the experience of modernity, speaking to contemporary critical debates. Benjamin's thought provides an exciting new lens for reading Woolf's work whose historiographical constructions are shown to possess a pronounced political impetus that intervenes with how history is perceived and recorded, also addressing crucial questions about the meaning and status of modern artworks.

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