



# Odyssean Identities in Modern Cultures: The Journey Home (Classical Memories/Modern Identity)

*Hunter Gardner, Sheila Murnaghan*

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Addressed to both classicists and students of modern culture, *Odyssean Identities in Modern Cultures: The Journey Home* traces the *Odyssey*'s central theme of homecoming in a wide range of narratives from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. Accounts of the journey home in novels, plays, lyric poems, paintings, and a television series explore the challenges of returning from a long absence to reclaim a former life.

These retellings raise fresh questions about the relationship between home and the identities we expect to find rooted there and stress the elusiveness of a satisfying homecoming. They remind us that the *Odyssey*'s happy ending is itself qualified by the hero's unsettled future, the violence of his return, and the independent desires of his friends and family members. At the same time, they highlight new obstacles to homecoming posed by the modern world with its political and economic upheavals, newly configured family relations and gender roles, and diminished confidence in the stability of identity. The authors discussed include Charlotte Yonge, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, George Seferis, Yannis Ritsos, Gwendolyn Brooks, Charles Frazier, W. B. Sebald, Marilynne Robinson, and Zachary Mason.

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