



# Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales From Ancient Greece

*François Hartog*

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The conception of the Other has long been a problem for philosophers. Emmanuel Levinas, best known for his attention to precisely that issue, argued that the voyages of Ulysses represent the very nature of Western philosophy: "His adventure in the world is nothing but a return to his native land, a complacency with the Same, a misrecognition of the Other." In *Memories of Odysseus*, François Hartog examines the truth of Levinas' assertion and, in the process, uncovers a different picture. Drawing on a remarkable range of authors and texts, ancient and modern, Hartog looks at accounts of actual travelers, as well as the way travel is used as a trope throughout ancient Greek literature, and finds that, instead of misrecognition, the Other is viewed with doubt and awe in the Homeric tradition. In fact, he argues, the *Odyssey* played a crucial role in shaping this attitude in the Greek mind, serving as inspiration for voyages in which new encounters caused the Greeks to revise their concepts of self and other. Ambitious in scope, this book is a sophisticated exploration of ancient Greece and its sense of identity.

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