

Odyssean Travels: A Literary History of Modern Memory

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The "Odyssey" is one of the best-remembered stories in world literature and world history. This 'old' story has been used across almost three millennia, again and again, as a resource to tell new stories, and to represent a broad spectrum of very different experiences. The Odyssey is a 'travelling memory', which, through translation, canonization, and colonialism, has achieved a truly global spread. This book understands the 'remediations' of classics (e.g., rewritings, adaptations) as productive acts of cultural recall. It shows how the Odyssey has been used to articulate 'modern memory' - which is defined as the expression of a given modernity's specific temporal and cultural (self-)consciousness. Using the afterlives of the Odyssey as a comparative case, the book tells a history of modern memory from ca. 1800 to the present. In line with new research on multiple modernities, it emphasizes the multiplicity of modern memory. It distinguishes between different phases and modes of modern memory, covering a broad spectrum of cultural contexts: from Germany to British India, the Black Atlantic, and back to Europe. Close attention is paid to literary and medial dynamics, which is understood as powerful forms of world- and memory-making. The book provides a synthesis of, and innovative perspectives on, the inventory of new approaches to memory as developed over the past decade ('remediation/premediation', 'travelling memory' etc.). It is the first encounter of memory studies, comparative literature, narratology and media studies with (classical) reception studies. And it will enable a better understanding of currently much-discussed ideas such as 'the modern' and 'the West' as phenomena of cultural memory.

Projektbeteiligte

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