



Rocks of nation: The imagination of Celtic Cornwall

Shelley Trower

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Rocks of nation reveals how the imagination of nations, and races, is grounded in rocks. In doing so it makes a striking contribution to theories of nation, offering new insights into how national identity is bound up with materiality. The 'Celts', in particular, are imagined to be a primitive race, much like the rocks on which they live. Rocks themselves, in turn, are felt to have a ghostly life of their own. The human identification with living landscapes lies behind attempts to claim exclusive ownership, as natives are understood to belong to, and are part of, the land or nation itself, while immigrants are excluded.

The book provides an in-depth case study of Cornwall and its economy in the wider context of Britain and the rise of nationalist politics, especially in England (UKIP) and Scotland (SNP). Economic conditions - dominated by the mining and tourist industries, both based in rocky landscapes - help to drive the human, nationalist identification with rocks, and the desire to banish outsiders. Spanning from the early nineteenth to the twenty-first century, the book traces the gradual formation of a cultural consciousness of Cornwall as a distinctively rocky nation through a wide range of literatures, including nineteenth-century geological journals and folklore, Gothic and detective fiction, Modernist and romance novels, travel narratives, 'New Age' eco-spiritualism and Cornish nationalist writings. Rocks of nation will be of interest to students and academics across the disciplines, from English literature and cultural geography to Celtic Studies, history and politics.

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