



# The Idea of Englishness: English Culture, National Identity and Social Thought

*Krishan Kumar*

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Ideas of Englishness, and of the English nation, have become a matter of renewed interest in recent years as a result of threats to the integrity of the United Kingdom and the perceived rise of that unusual thing, English nationalism. Interrogating the idea of an English nation, and of how that might compare with other concepts of nationhood, this book enquires into the origins of English national identity, partly by questioning the assumption of its long-standing existence. It investigates the role of the British empire - the largest empire in world history - in the creation of English and British identities, and the results of its disappearance. Considering the "myths of the English" - the ideas and images that the English and others have constructed about their history and their sense of themselves as a people - the distinctiveness of English social thought (in comparison with that of other nations), the relationship between English and British identity and the relationship of Englishness to Europe, this wide-ranging, comparative and historical approach to understanding the particular nature of Englishness and English national identity, will appeal to scholars of sociology, cultural studies and history with interests in English and British national identity and debates about England's future place in the United Kingdom.

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