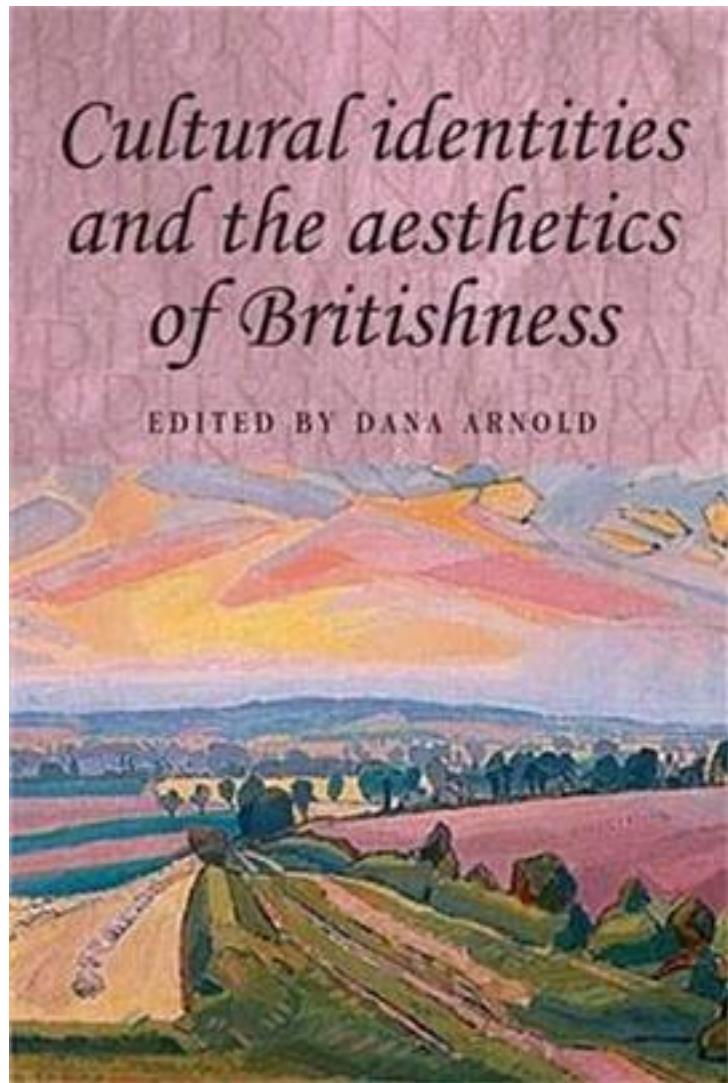


Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness



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The need for a single public culture - or the creation of an authentic identity - is fundamental to our understanding of nationalism and nationhood. But how are these cultural identities expressed? This book examines British imperial, colonial and postcolonial national identities within their political and social contexts. By considering the export, adoption and creation of such cultural identities, these essays show how nationhood and nationalism are self-consciously defined tools designed to focus and inspire loyalty. As such, they are integral to the larger process of constructing a public culture. The contributors to this fascinating and timely collection present these ideas with particular reference to English cultural identity and its interaction with the 'Empire'. They examine the national, imperial and colonial aesthetic - how architecture, landscape, painting, sculpture and literature were used, appropriated and re-appropriated in the furtherance of social and political agendas, and how this impacted on the making of 'Britishness' in all its complexities. It is demonstrated that not only did the dominant aesthetic culture reinforce the dominant political and social ideology, it also re-presented and re-constructed the notion of British national identity. It will be of interest to those studying the effect of the Empire on Britain, and to those researching wider issues of British identity.

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