



Literature and the Growth of British Nationalism: The Influence of Romantic Poetry and Bardic Criticism

Francesco Crocco

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This book explores how British Romantic poetry--the writing, reading, and critical reception of it--reinforced British nationalism in the 19th century, ripening the political processes of nationhood that began with the first Act of Union in 1707. Using archival research on literary collections, criticism and reviews, this study documents the rise of bardic criticism in the 18th century, a style of literary criticism that reinvented the vernacular poet as a national bard and established a national role for poetry. Within this context, this book offers a new reading of major works by Romantic poets from Wordsworth and Coleridge to Felicia Hemans and Anna Letitia Barbauld, illuminating the ways they corroborated the public image of poets as bona fide national bards and advanced British nationalism, even when they intentionally set out to oppose or reform the politics of state.



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