



Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia, and Longing in Oral Cultures

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An international ensemble of folklore scholars looks at some varied ways in which national and ethnic groups have traditionally and creatively used imagined states of existence---some idealizations, some demonizations---in the construction of identities for themselves and for others. Drawing on oral traditions, especially as represented in traditional ballads, broadsides, and the tale collections, they consider fertile landscapes of the mind where utopias overflow with bliss and abundance, stereotyped national and ethnic caricatures define the lives of "others," nostalgia glorifies home and occupation, and idealized and mythological animals serve as cultural icons and guideposts to harmonious social life.

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