

The Uttermost Part of the Earth: Islands on the edge ... and in the centre of the North Atlantic

The Shetland Islands are a good example of what island cultures and societies can tell us about the construction and maintenance of national identities, as well as the way in which historical perspectives and internalised ideas influence how we locate parts of Britain. How do these - other islands become part of the national mental map? And how do islanders themselves incorporate - Britishness into their cultural identity?

For the —Northern Isles|| of Orkney and Shetland, their geographical position has historically meant being an outpost of the British Isles, at its Northern —edge,|| as noted by Sandy Cluness, Convenor of the Shetland Islands Council, in an interview with The Journal: —We are on the periphery and have all the higher costs that come with that and not many of the advantages. This chapter demonstrates that the cultural heritage of the Scottish Northern Islands actually insists on being —other, often resisting, and sometimes opposing, the dominant, national historical and political narratives. The Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland are therefore of real interest in terms of exploring the complex and adaptable nature of representing —otherness|| within British identity, and the way islanders actively utilise their economic, political and cultural-historical environment to create a multiplicity of localised island identities within the national narrative.

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