



# Bridging Divides: The Channel Tunnel and English Legal Identity in the New Europe

*Eve Darian-Smith*

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**Bridging Divides: The Channel Tunnel and English Legal Identity in the New Europe** Eve Darian-Smith

In a study that is original and timely, Eve Darian-Smith uses the Channel Tunnel between England and France to explore the shifting geographies of nationalism, postcolonialism, and legal autonomy in the formation of the European Union. Conducting ethnographic research in Kent, the county at the English mouth of the Tunnel, she looks at regional differences in feelings about Europe and at the vocabulary used in discussing the Tunnel. Visual representations—political cartoons, photographs, etchings—regarding the Tunnel are also examined.

Two hundred years after Napoleon planned to invade England via a tunnel, the completion in 1994 of a fast rail link between Great Britain and the European mainland symbolizes the disintegration of conventional state borders. While the Tunnel precariously affirms the ideal of a united Europe, it also brings to the fore questions of boundaries between the first and third worlds, colonizers and colonized, and the "East" and the "West." *Bridging Divides* is about much more than an engineering feat. By exploring historical narratives, tunnel stories, and legal myths, Darian-Smith's study shows the interconnections between people's memories of the past and current history.

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