



Strange Likeness: The Use of Old English in Twentieth-Century Poetry

Chris Jones

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Strange Likeness provides the first full account of how Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) was rediscovered by twentieth-century poets, and the uses to which they put that discovery in their own writing. Chapters deal with Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, Edwin Morgan, and Seamus Heaney. Stylistic debts to Old English are examined, along with the effects on these poets' work of specific ideas about Old English language and literature as taught while these poets were studying the subject at university. Issues such as linguistic primitivism, the supposed 'purity' of the English language, the politics and ethics of translation, and the construction of 'Englishness' within the literary canon are discussed in the light of these poets and their Old English encounters. Heaney's translation of Beowulf is fully contextualized within the body of the rest of his work for the first time.

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