



Starting Lines in Scottish, Irish, and English Poetry : From Burns to Heaney: From Burns to Heaney, 2000, Fiona Stafford, 0191583979, 9780191583971, OUP Oxford, 2000.

Why should a poem begin with a line from another poem? Is an eighteenth-century epigraph working in the same way as a post-modern quotation? And how are the dynamics of the new text and the source affected by issues of nationhood, language, history, and cultural tradition? Are literary ideas of originality and imitation, allusion and influence inherently political if the poems emerge from different sides of a border or of a colonial relationship? Taking as a framework the history of relations between Ireland, England, and Scotland since the 1707 Union, the book explores such questions through a series of close readings. Textual encounters singled out for detailed discussion include Burns's use of Shakespeare, Coleridge's reference to 'Sir Patrick Spens', James Clarence Mangan's adaptation of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ciaran Carson's quotation from John Keats, Seamus Heaney's meditation on Henry Vaughan, and the evolution of 'The Homes of England' from Felicia Hemans to Noel Coward.

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