



# Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England)

*Jennifer Neville*

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## **Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England)** Jennifer Neville

This book examines descriptions of the natural world in a wide range of Old English poetry. Jennifer Neville describes the physical conditions experienced by the Anglo-Saxons - the animals, diseases, landscapes, seas and weather with which they had to contend. She argues that poetic descriptions of these elements were not a reflection of the existing physical conditions but a literary device used by Anglo-Saxons to define more important issues: the state of humanity, the creation and maintenance of society, the power of individuals, the relationship between God and creation and the power of writing to control information. Examples of contemporary literature in other languages are used to provide a sense of Old English poetry's particular approach, which incorporated elements from Germanic, Christian and classical sources. The result of this approach was not a consistent cosmological scheme but a rather contradictory vision which reveals much about how the Anglo-Saxons viewed themselves.

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