

**P.D. Garside and Gillian Hughes, *The Shorter Poems*. The Edinburgh Edition of Walter Scott's Poetry. Vol 7. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Pp. 655. £100. ISBN 9781474424431.**

**Susan Oliver, *Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland: Emergent Ecologies of a Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 229. £75. ISBN 9781108831574.**

These two texts, which were initially published around Walter Scott's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, take the scholarship of Scott in new and interesting directions. *The Shorter Poems* brings together Scott's short poems, many of which were previously hard to access. *Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland* reads Scott through an ecocritical lens, opening up both Scott studies and ecocritical studies to new perspectives. Although very different, they are both testament to the way in which research on this pivotal author is central to Romantic studies.

*The Shorter Poems* is one of ten volumes which form the Edinburgh Edition of Walter Scott's Poetry. While six of the volumes each feature one long narrative poem, four of the volumes, including the one currently under review, include a selection of Scott's work. In this case, the editors endeavour to include all of Scott's poems that are not published elsewhere, spanning his earliest metrical output to verses written immediately before his death: 134 in total. As the editors have followed a chronological structure, the development of Scott's poetical career can be traced; the early poems are heavily influenced by balladry, translations, and youthful love, whereas the ones nearer the end of the collection are social, frequently written for or about friends and acquaintances. Along with this development, it is also striking to notice how Scott returns to the same themes and ideas throughout his career. Other than the patterns made apparent by chronology, there are no thematic groupings in the main part of the text, leaving it to the readers to develop their own responses. In addition to the 134 poems, the volume begins with acknowledgements and a general introduction by the series editor, Alison Lumsden. The poems are followed by an 'Essay on the Texts' which explains the editors' decisions; 'Combined Editorial Notes' which include textual, historical and explanatory notes for each poem, as required; an appendix, which includes poems attributed to Scott which the editors have found were not written by him or which cannot be proved to have been written by him; an index of titles; and an index of first lines.

The poems are well presented, printed in a clear, large font with enough white space, allowing the reader to approach each poem on its own terms. Although the quality of the poems varies, the overall impression the reader gets is of Scott's competence as a poet, his engagement with and development of Romantic themes, and his interaction with his historical and social context. In particular, Scott engages with supernatural tradition and history in multiple poems, meaning that his poems provide a useful illumination to his historical moment. The editorial information is also useful and well-written. The 'General Introduction' starts by stating 'the neglect of Scott's poetry is curious' (x) and discussing its significance in relation to the more widely read Wordsworth and Byron. Lumsden goes on to explain the editorial decisions taken in the series. Unlike the novels, Lumsden explains, 'Scott's poetry, being published under his own name, was subjected to considerable social pressure' (p. xii), meaning that the manuscripts do not usually provide a comprehensive representation of Scott's final intention. On the other hand, she explains that '[c]ollation also revealed that while Scott may have been "improving" his poems at an early stage, they were also simultaneously deteriorating' (xiii). The challenges this caused editors and the solutions they employed are briefly explained. The volume editors continue this discussion in the 'Essay on the Texts', detailing their editorial decisions and providing transparency and clarity to the reader, along with justifying the structure and

presentation of the texts. The attention-to-detail of these two sections is continued in the 'Combined Editorial Notes' which includes a wealth of information.

Overall, this edition exhibits the excellence that we have come to expect of the Edinburgh Editions of Scott's work. It is easy-to-read, engaging, and illuminates aspects of Scott's work, life, and historical moment. It is especially valuable because it brings together poems that have been difficult to access and creates opportunities for further research.

Susan Oliver, the author of *Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland*, has a well-established reputation as the expert on Walter Scott and ecocriticism. In this monograph, the first on its subject, Oliver brings together her extensive knowledge to explore the connections between environment, history, society and story in a range of Scott's writings. By drawing from his ballads, poems, novels, letters, and personal life, Oliver weaves a complex and colourful tapestry of significant details. The monograph is split into six chapters: 'Introduction: Walter Scott and the Environment', 'Shifting Ecologies: Grasslands, Rivers and Shorelines', 'Toxic Ecologies, Ecogothic and Violence against the Land', 'Wild Places, Rarity and Extinction', 'Trees', and 'Stone, Water, Air.'

The density of Oliver's research is apparent from the introduction, in which she outlines the historical context of Scott's life (including historical and political events alongside agricultural and ecological changes), elements of ecocritical theory, and a preliminary exploration of how Scott's literary endeavours recognise the entanglement of people and the world which they inhabit. She explains that her 'aim has been to provide a preliminary investigation of how his storytelling drew public attention to real ecological problems, and how the agency of his writing mediates relationships between memory, mythmaking and the biosphere' (25). In the second chapter, Oliver draws on scientific understandings of land and chronology, showing how Scott, who 'almost always links human events with environmental factors,' (31) depicts a landscape that is haunted by the ways in which land use was changing, from both ecological and human perspectives. Case studies prove Oliver's point: her excellent analysis of the anthropomorphic riparian environments in *The Monastery* is a case in point.

The connections between ecocritical theory, Scott's work, and his historical context continue in the final four chapters. Chapter three is concerned with the ecogothic and ecophobic, engaging with ecocritical approaches while providing in-depth analysis of ballads and novels. As with chapter two, Oliver explores how Scott was interested in the effect of environmental violence on both the land and the people who inhabit it. Likewise, Chapter four 'looks at Scott's representation of lost or endangered species and human social forms that cannot remain static but must either evolve or perish' (90). Oliver begins with the caveat that although there is no such thing as 'wild,' she will use the term as it was used in the early nineteenth century. From there, she explores the representation of wild places and peoples whom Scott describes as wild, focussing particularly on the representation of near extinction whether that be of tribal life or packs of wolves. Chapter five looks at Scott's relationship with trees, considering how 'he explored connections between people and the woodlands, forests and individual trees with which they lived' (113), and compares his tree-planting campaign in Abbotsford to his early work as a ballad collector. Oliver concludes that 'Scott longed for a transhuman magnificence that he felt Scotland was losing through depopulation, deforestation and the planting of foreign monocultures. Although anticipating Jeffers, Scott's environments do not exclude man so much as 'situate humans in a vital relationship with other living things' (139). The final chapter continues exploring the connections between people, ecology and literature. Oliver focuses specifically on stone, water, and air, providing case studies and historical context to illuminate Scott's work. In lieu of a conclusion, Oliver provides a one-page 'final word' in which she brings her arguments together, claiming that '*Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland* seeks to raise awareness of how the sense of belonging for which Scott has long been known is vibrantly and marvellously ecological' (180).

*Walter Scott and the Greening of Scotland* is a far-reaching and ambitious monograph, which pulls together knowledge from different scientific, historical and literary spheres. It provides new insight on both Scott's work and human engagement with the environment – both in the Romantic period and now. It challenges its readers to extend their understanding of timely issues by understanding how they were engaged with by a seminal author from the beginning of the Anthropocene (if the Anthropocene is understood to have begun at the start of the Industrial Revolution). However, at times, the variety of scientific knowledge combined with the numerous examples from Scott's work causes the author's overall argument to become obfuscated. Readers interested in learning about ecocriticism and Scott might find Oliver's articles on the subject a more accessible starting point.

These two books are a welcome addition not only to Scott scholarship but to the entire field of Romantic studies. Together, they open Scott's work up to a range of new interpretations, situating him firmly in the centre of Romanticism and current discussions on literature and life.

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