

Editorialising Practices, Competitive Marketability and James Thomson's *The Seasons*

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Abstract: The lapse of Andrew Millar's copyright for James Thomson's *The Seasons* in 1765 resulted in an increasing number of new editions of the poem being published in the late eighteenth century. This article compares the print-cultural make-ups of three editions of *The Seasons* that were issued in the 1790s. An examination of the print-cultural differences between these publishing ventures reveals distinct editorial practices and marketing strategies. In an attempt to increase the attractiveness of their editions with visual and textual paraphernalia, the producers developed their own 'versions' of *The Seasons* and, in the process, fashioned new interpretations of Thomson's poem.

Keywords: James Thomson, *The Seasons*, print culture, book history, editorial practices

A study of the editorialising practices surrounding James Thomson's *The Seasons*, one of the most frequently reissued poems in the eighteenth century, offers insights into the history of the production and marketing of books in Britain. Originally published in 1730 by Andrew Millar and John Millan, Thomson's poem quickly became a best-seller, as indicated by the fact that it was reprinted in various formats at regular intervals until Millar's death in 1768. As other booksellers also wanted to explore its economically lucrative potential, *The Seasons* became central to developments in copyright law. In 1774 the copyright to Thomson's poem was successfully challenged. Thomas Beckett sued the Scottish bookseller Alexander Donaldson for issuing and selling a pirated edition of the poem.¹ Motivated by 'a desire to encourage and promote the advancement of learning, to nurture a buoyant marketplace of ideas',² the House of Lords decided against the notion of perpetual copyright in favour of the finite, protective measures of the 'Statute of Anne' (1710). As a result, new and competing editions of *The Seasons* emerged on the English and Scottish book markets from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards. Booksellers differentiated their editions of Thomson's poem by issuing it in different formats and by adding visual and textual paraphernalia, such as illustrations and critical essays, in an attempt to increase their chances of making profits.

In this article I will examine three editions of *The Seasons* to explore the publishing practices surrounding the poem in the 1790s: the first, by John Murray in 1792, which was modelled on an edition issued in 1778;³ the second, by Archibald Hamilton in 1793;⁴ the third, by the Scottish bookseller Robert Morison Jr, also in 1793.⁵ The editions appeared in a large royal octavo or a small quarto format. The booksellers targeted upper-middle-class buyers, selling their products in the price range from 12s. 6d. to £1 10s. In terms of production standards, the editions can be characterised as fine-printed editions: they were printed on high-quality paper; the booksellers paid particular attention to the typography and the layout; they included a new set of illustrations which were engraved after original designs; and they each employed an editor to produce textual supplements to the original text.

By examining booksellers' late eighteenth-century approaches to *The Seasons*, I aim to contribute to the study of processes of print-cultural reinterpretations and transformations of texts. A comparison of the physical and editorial make-ups of the editions not only offers insights into the distinctive strategies booksellers devised, in response to earlier successful models such as Millan and Millar's, to attract as many consumers as possible; it also indicates the ways in which the editors refashioned *The Seasons* and developed alternative interpretations of the poem. Moreover, an examination of a Scottish alongside two English editions will allow me to identify regional variations in the editorial practices and the different methods of appropriating Thomson's poem to a specific cultural context. Whereas the editors of the English editions responded to earlier commentaries to engage in debates on what constitutes a literary classic, the producers of the Scottish edition, capitalising on and contributing to the rapid expansion of Scottish Enlightenment publishing identified by Richard Sher, attempted to redefine *The Seasons* as part of a national canon of Scottish Enlightenment authors.⁶

I. *The British Book Market in the Late Eighteenth Century*

The rejection, in 1774, of the London booksellers' claim to perpetual copyright profoundly affected the printing and making available of texts previously under copyright in London. William St Clair confirms that the legal judgement 'was a decisive moment for the whole subsequent development of notions of intellectual property, for the price of books and of access to texts, for the progress of reading, and for the subsequent course of the national culture widely defined'.⁷ As the legal decision made impossible the booksellers' monopoly which had facilitated the manipulation of the prices of books on the market,⁸ the publishing trade became increasingly competitive. Booksellers made their products more cheaply available to meet the growing demands of a rising entrepreneurial middle class with greater spending power, and provincial cities became prominent loci for the production and distribution of books.⁹

The increased productivity of the book trade in the eighteenth century coincided with an expansion in readership, which had a significant impact on the manufacturing and marketing of books. Since more and more reprints of texts that were no longer under copyright protection appeared, booksellers were continually looking for new ways to maximise the attractiveness of their products so as to encourage consumer interest. Barbara Benedict contends that 'publishing booksellers competed to provide the most exquisitely or cheaply packaged collection of those authors or texts deemed canonical. [...] Books were plentiful things in a culture dedicated to accumulation: ephemeral figments of fashion, and material commodities to be bought. Books were the latest, *new things*.'¹⁰ Booksellers invested in the material characteristics of their editions and promoted them as valuable print objects to attract as wide a readership as possible. Murray advertised his 1792 edition as 'the most elegant and beautiful edition of the book ever' to 'the lovers of fine printing',¹¹ while Hamilton similarly promoted his 'splendid edition of Thomson's Seasons' to 'the lovers of the fine arts'.¹² Keeping up with the latest technological developments in paper, type and printing, the booksellers enhanced the novelty value of their editions.¹³ They were executed on high-quality wove (Murray, Hamilton) or vellum (Morison) paper.¹⁴ Hamilton also commissioned a type founder to cast 'a new and beautiful Type cast on Purpose'.¹⁵

Apart from experimenting with the material execution of their editions, booksellers included various visual and textual paraphernalia to distinguish their editions from

competing alternatives on the market. Booksellers aiming at the upper regions of the market most frequently invested in a set of illustrations. The importance of engravings to generate appeal with the buying public is confirmed by the fact that at least thirty-eight illustrated editions of *The Seasons* were produced in Britain in the final quarter of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ All of the supplementary material – illustrations, biographies, critical essays, indexes and glossaries – formed an interpretative matrix through which Thomson's poem was mediated. Subject to change over time, the print-cultural make-ups of the editions of *The Seasons* not only reflect innovations in marketing strategies but also allow for a reconstruction of the interpretative and cultural contexts within which particular editions were produced and read.

II. Print-Cultural (Re-)Fashionings of The Seasons

To gain insight into the economic and cultural appropriation of *The Seasons*, I will provide a diachronic overview of a range of earlier eighteenth-century editions. Millan (1702-1784) and Millar (1705-1768), the original publishers of Thomson's poem, had already recognised the value of including additional material to their editions of *The Seasons*.¹⁷ They issued a subscription edition in quarto format in 1730 with four specially commissioned engravings by Nicolas Tardieu (1674-1749) after designs by William Kent (*bap.* 1668, d. 1748). These full-page copper-plate tableaux provided a holistic narrative corresponding to Thomson's mythopoeic rendering of the divinely ordered universe. In the same year Millan and Millar also produced an octavo edition of *The Seasons*, a gathering of the separately published instalments of the seasons and issued with a collective title page.¹⁸ This edition contained four plates depicting allegorical renderings of the seasons after designs by Bernard Picart (1673-1733). Whereas Picart's plates were reused only once, in 1735, Kent's engravings were reissued up to 1765. From 1766 onwards, engravers focused on new subjects drawn from the poem, thus taking note of alternative interpretations which had developed in the arts, as exemplified by a furniture print of the interpolated episode of Celadon and Amelia, produced by William Woollett (1735-1785) after a design by the landscape painter Richard Wilson (1713-1782).¹⁹ When Millar issued a two-volume edition of Thomson's works in quarto format in 1762, he included two allographic texts, which memorialised and mythified the poet: William Collins's (1721-1759) memorial 'Ode on the Death of Mr Thomson' and 'An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr James Thomson', by the author's friend and fellow countryman Patrick Murdoch (d. 1774). Since these texts were regularly included in other editions of *The Seasons*, both inside and outside Britain, they were central to the textual construction of Thomson's critical reputation.²⁰

Particularly in the final decade of the eighteenth century, a significant number of – often illustrated – editions of *The Seasons* were produced for upper-class and upper-middle-class readers at considerable expense in terms of paper quality, text design and print-cultural make-up.²¹ This expansion in production of new editions was the result of a renewal of interest in Thomson both in Scotland and in England. The initiatives of David Stuart Erskine, the eleventh earl of Buchan (1742-1829), were crucial factors in the increased fashionability of Thomson in the 1790s. The founder of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Buchan was a keen patron of the arts and scholarship related to Scottish culture. In 1791 he erected a classical monument and organised a literary festival in honour of Thomson in Ednam, the poet's birthplace in the south of Scotland. The festival, which became an annual event until at least 1825,²² represented a growing recognition of

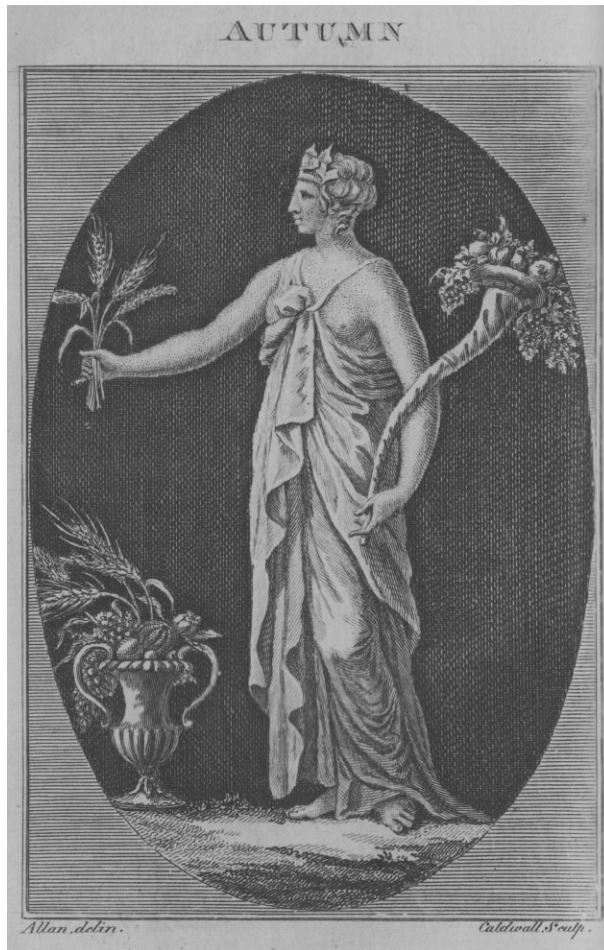
the poet's literary accomplishments and facilitated a Thomson cult in Scotland. Wishing to make Thomson's text available in as impressive a format as possible, Buchan commissioned Giambattista Bodoni (1740-1813) in 1790 to print a folio and a quarto edition set in the Italian typographer's new type.²³ The edition outclassing all previous efforts would be produced by Peltro William Tomkins (1759-1840) in 1798. This folio edition was issued with furniture prints, which were also made available in the form of colour-printed plates to enhance the exclusiveness of the product.²⁴

III. John Murray's Revisiting of His Earlier Print-Cultural Model of The Seasons

John Murray (1737-1793) recognised and tried to profit from the demand for fine-printed editions of *The Seasons*. In 1792 he advertised proposals for an ambitious subscription edition in four parts in quarto format,²⁵ which was scheduled to be executed with twenty-two engravings by William Sharp (1749-1824) after paintings by Robert Smirke (1752-1845), an Associate Member of the Royal Academy specialising in paintings for literary and historical texts. The presence in the market of other large-format, high-quality editions proved too strong, however: John Strahan had produced a fine-printed, illustrated edition of *The Seasons* earlier that year; Tomkins was already circulating proposals for his folio edition;²⁶ and Morison had issued a print specimen of *The Beautiful Episode of Palemon & Lavinia, from The Seasons, by James Thomson*.²⁷ Owing to the competition, Murray probably did not receive enough subscriptions, causing him to abandon the project and to focus on a more modest edition instead. It was executed on 'very fine woven paper' and was available in two formats: an edition in royal octavo selling at 19s. in boards or at £1 1s. handsomely bound; and a more affordable crown octavo at 9s. in boards or at 10s. 6d. neatly bound.²⁸

With this edition Murray capitalised on the success of his first octavo edition of *The Seasons*, printed twice in 1778 and again in 1779 and 1792, just before revising it. Murray had become a bookseller in 1768, after a military career, when he bought the well-established business of William Sandby. He had established a reputation for himself as a producer of fine-printed books in London printing circles through his edition of Thomas Gray's poems (1776), the superb quality of which he achieved with a level of technical competence that very few of his fellow booksellers could rival.²⁹ He applied the same production standards to his 1778 edition of *The Seasons*, 'a New and Uncommon Edition, beautifully printed on a fine Writing Paper', selling at 4s. in boards.³⁰ The additional material in the edition indicates, however, that Murray realised that the success of his publishing venture depended not only on its material execution.

Recognising that illustrations significantly enhanced consumer appeal, he commissioned eight designs to be engraved in copper by James Caldwell (1739-1819). Four of these full-page plates were based on designs by the Scottish portrait and genre painter David Allan (1744-1796). Allan, who would later become renowned for the illustrations accompanying the 1788 edition of Allan Ramsay's pastoral *The Gentle Shepherd*, had just returned from a tour of Italy and offered Murray 'four allegorical figures in the latest and best neo-classical style'.³¹ These renderings of the seasons are loosely based on the 1730 illustrations by Picart: 'While not specifically referring to episodes or description from the poem, [they] captured the general allegorical impulse characterizing the text' (Fig. 1).³² The plate for 'Autumn', for instance, depicting a classically draped female figure, incorporates the characteristic attributes of a sheaf of wheat to symbolise the harvest and a cornucopia to suggest the fruitfulness of the season.



1. Full-page plate by David Allan, engraved by James Caldwell, for 'Autumn', from *The Seasons* (London: printed for John Murray, 1778). Reproduced from a copy in the author's possession

The other illustrations, after designs by William Hamilton (1751-1801), focus on different subjects. Hamilton specialised in portraits and history painting and would become a distinguished Royal Academician in 1789, exhibiting in a number of print galleries, such as Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. He would play a pivotal role in the art industry surrounding the works of Thomson in the 1790s.³³ Apart from a frontispiece illustration of the Westminster Abbey monument to Thomson, which memorialised the poet as a divinely inspired poet of Nature and Liberty,³⁴ Hamilton produced designs of three interpolated episodes in *The Seasons*: Musidora, Palemon and Lavinia, and a shepherd perishing in the snow. These episodes, which include the tales of the bathing Musidora secretly being spied on by her lover Damon and the shepherd dying in a winter storm, provide an anthropocentric narrative that complements the nature descriptions of the poem. Depictions of these tales would prove popular, as they were frequently chosen as the subject for illustra-

tions in later editions of *The Seasons*. These plates reflect the sentimental and dramatic subjects for which Thomson's composition was increasingly commended.

Introducing two different illustrative narratives – the one allegorical, the other realistic-sentimental – Murray offered iconographic alternatives to Kent's tableaux. Kent (1685-1748), who was active as a painter, architect, designer of gardens and interior furnishings, combined neo-classical pictorial elements with conventions drawn from Italian landscape painting. The designs for the 1730 edition of *The Seasons* corresponded with Thomson's 'poetic pictorialism', by means of which he reflected on the religious position of man within the natural landscape.³⁵ In each of the illustrations Kent developed a dynamic narrative connecting the celestial sphere, represented by allegorical personifications of the seasons and their train of followers, and the human world, which was characterised by depictions of man within a natural environment. Even though the human remained separated from the divine sphere, the interrelationship established between the deities and mankind reflected Thomson's holistic view of the season's divine origin and its effect on humanity. The illustrators of Murray's edition of *The Seasons* departed from Kent's unifying renderings by disconnecting the divine and human iconographic elements. The allegorical plates provided abstract representations of the seasons that were mostly void of the dynamic dimensions of the earliest tableaux. By illustrating the popular interpolated episodes, Hamilton abandoned Kent's comprehensive interpretation in favour of selective readings of the poem.

Owing to the need for differentiation in the market for editions of *The Seasons*, designers, by 1792, had explored various new themes and subjects in their illustrations.³⁶ Murray consequently introduced an entirely new set of engravings, for which he commissioned Conrad Martin Metz (1755-1827). Metz was a German illustrator who had settled in London, where he specialised in engravings after 'old Italian masters' such as Titian, Annibale Caracci and Guercino.³⁷ The fact that Murray commissioned a new set of engravings carries profound implications. Whereas he spent £56 16s. on the engravings for the 1778 edition, the total costs for the plates in 1792 amounted to £93 14s. 10d.³⁸ This considerable financial investment indicates that Murray anticipated that the new illustrations would facilitate good sales of the edition.

The introduction of the second set of engravings offers insights into the changing illustration practices at the time. In the early eighteenth century book illustrations had been influenced by the neo-classical mythologising impulse manifested in the arts. By the end of the century this focus had considerably weakened, owing to the development of a less institutionalised painting industry and the secularisation of representational media for the middle classes. Instead, anthropocentric scenes and sentimental tableaux became the most prominent representational mode. The deliberate decision on Murray's part to remove Allan's plates is a first indication that allegorical renderings of the seasons had grown unfashionable.

The visual patterns predominant in illustrations of the 1790s are manifested in the plate to 'Spring' (Fig. 2), engraved by James Neagle (1765-1822). In Metz's secular illustration the upper part of the design focused on the landscape, the lower part on human elements. The depiction of a pastoral love tableau and maidens dancing to rural music in the plate characterised spring as the season of love. These anthropocentric scenes were set against a background of majestic trees, a convention drawn from the contemporary tradition of landscape painting as it was fashioned by Wilson. The primary function of Metz's designs was not to provide a holistic interpretation similar to Kent's, nor were they intended to illustrate specific passages such as those included in the 1778 edition. Rather, the illustrations were designed to display scenes typical of the season and to evoke a sentimental



2. Full-page plate by Conrad Martin Metz, engraved by James Neagle, for 'Spring', from *The Seasons* (London: printed for John Murray, 1792). Reproduced from a copy in the author's possession

response from the reader by creating a blissful image of man's undisturbed life within the natural landscape. The diverging iconographical modes in the engravings to Murray's editions of *The Seasons* are indicative of the ways in which booksellers catered to changes in taste and reading practices and employed illustrations to negotiate the competitive eighteenth-century book market.

Recognising the print-cultural importance of illustrations,³⁹ I nevertheless want to argue that the impact of textual paraphernalia for the production, marketing and consumption of texts in the eighteenth century should not be neglected. Supplementary texts such as prefatory essays, biographies and extensive footnotes equally influenced a reader's engagement with the primary text. In response to the popularity of critical reviews, editors of eighteenth-century literary works, many of whom also contributed to review journals, such as the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*, often introduced a commentary dimension into their reading apparatuses, so as to argue why a particular author or text was worthy of being read.⁴⁰ In this manner, editors not only influenced an author's critical

reputation. Rather, they could also develop a literary-critical discourse and define a set of normative values to establish a literary canon.

Supplementary texts had featured prominently in Millar's edition of Thomson's works in 1762 but also in 1777, when George Wright introduced a completely new feature, in the form of textual notes, in J. French's octavo edition of *The Seasons*. These notes were not aimed at a readership trained in the reading of belles-lettres, as he 'rather wished to draw some moral and entertaining reflections from the whole (where it could be done with propriety) to assist the reader's more private meditations, than to shew his own learning'.⁴¹ French's edition appeared at an opportune moment. As a result of the rejection of perpetual copyright, a reading public expanding into the lower social strata needed to be catered for with cheaper editions.⁴² Wright took advantage of the changes in the literary market-place by adding notes which allowed readers of any educational background to engage with the moral aspects of the text. The notes made Thomson's poem more accessible, as a result of which the edition was ideally suited for use in schools. The success of Wright's editorial innovation contributed to the wide use of annotation practices in later editions of *The Seasons*, which in this case culminated in the reprinting of French's edition three times in the course of the same year.

Murray, too, picked up on the latest interest in literary criticism, by including an essay by John Aikin (1747-1822). In 1777 Aikin had examined the ways in which natural description had featured in poetry, in *An Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry*. In this work he had already singled out Thomson's 'truly excellent and original poem' as the most innovative in its 'variety of genuine observations in natural history'.⁴³ Whereas Wright's notes introduced individual moral observations and reflections to help readers make sense of obscure passages, Aikin offered a unifying interpretation of the poem in his 'Essay on the Plan and Character of Thomson's Seasons'. Highlighting Thomson's poetic merits, Aikin provided the reader with a general framework to engage more deeply with the poem. He first places *The Seasons* in its literary context, presenting a generic consideration of the long poem and pointing out the pioneering role that Thomson played in the development of descriptive nature poetry. Examining the formal properties of Thomson's natural descriptions, Aikin defines the poem's unity within a narrative structure of progression in which the seasons resemble stages in the life of man: the poem works its way from the birth and youth of spring, through the vigour and energy of summer and the maturity and decline of autumn, all the way to bleak old age, represented by winter.

Aikin further established himself as a literary critic towards the end of the century. His involvement in multiple review journals, such as the *Monthly Review*, *Monthly Magazine* and the *Annual Review*, enabled him to expand on his earlier work and to instruct readers on the merits of the country's principal authors. His critical thinking on literature was most comprehensively expressed in his *Letters to a Young Lady*. As occasioned by the addressee's receiving of a set of the English poets, Aikin embarks on a course of poetry 'as may best conduce to the forming of your taste and cultivating your understanding'.⁴⁴

Murray successfully capitalised on Aikin's critical reputation and exploited the commercial potential of his essay, which quickly became a standard commentary on *The Seasons*. In 1778 Murray paid Aikin £10 to obtain the exclusive rights to publish the text.⁴⁵ The copyright allowed him not only to publish the essay separately in 1788, making it available at the price of 2s.,⁴⁶ but also to use it as a commodity feature to promote his edition of Thomson's work. The essay is generally referred to in advertisements and is sometimes singled out as a unique addition nowhere else to be found: 'Dr. Aikin's Essay upon Thomson's *Seasons* is to be found prefixed only to this edition'.⁴⁷ It does not come as a surprise,

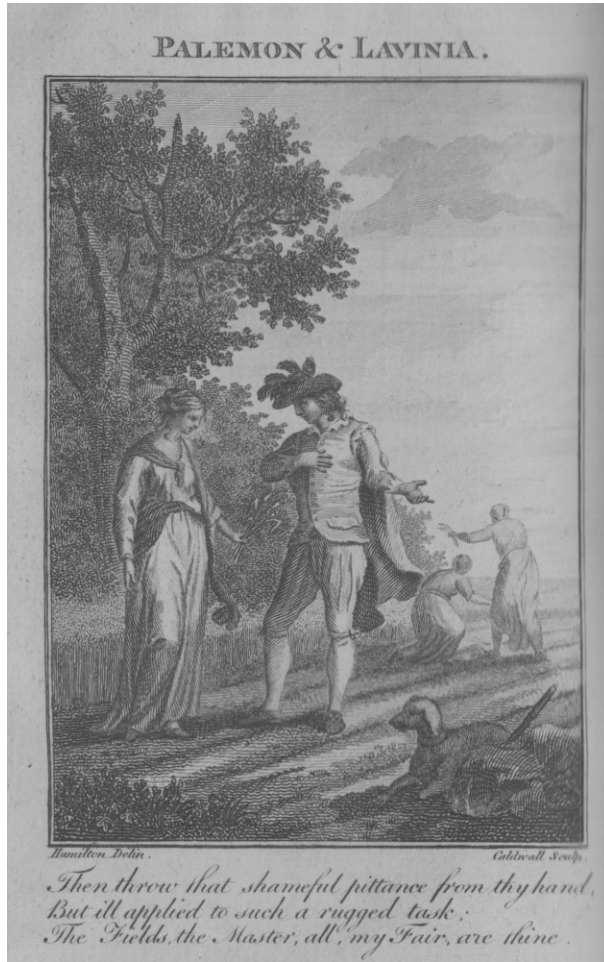
then, that Murray included the essay in the 1792 edition of *The Seasons*. In fact, Murray published his second edition at an opportune time. According to the copyright act of 1710, the so-called 'Statute of Anne', the bookseller was granted legal protection and ownership of the essay for a period of fourteen years, after which the copyright would return to Aikin as the author and proprietor of the piece. As his copyright was about to lapse in 1792, Murray managed to capitalise on this valuable sales asset one last time in his new edition. In effect, he thus skillfully established a copyright monopoly over the most frequently produced critical essay on *The Seasons*.⁴⁸

IV. Archibald Hamilton's Competitive Market Alternative

Around the same time as Murray, Archibald Hamilton (1719-1793) produced another fine-printed edition of *The Seasons* in royal octavo format in 1793. The edition, which sold in boards at 12s. 6d. or in a five-part instalment at 2s. 6d. per part,⁴⁹ not only represented a competitive alternative to other editions on the market; it also appeared as a direct rival to Murray's octavo edition, published a year earlier and reissued in 1793 with a cancel title page. Hamilton, who had worked for the highly successful printing business of William Strahan, had become a prominent printer in his own right in 1756, when he printed the lucrative first edition of Tobias Smollett's *Complete History of England* for the bookseller James Rivington. Through his close friendship with the Scottish writer, Hamilton became the publisher of the *Critical Review* in 1758 and its chief proprietor and editor in 1763. Involved in the production of the *British Magazine, or Monthly Repository for Gentlemen and Ladies*, the *Lady's Magazine* and the *Town and Country Magazine*, Hamilton was the leading periodical printer and publisher by 1770 and possessed an extensive knowledge of editorial and publishing strategies. To compete more effectively with Murray's editions, Hamilton realised that his edition of *The Seasons* also required a distinct print-cultural make-up, in terms of both its visual and its textual material.

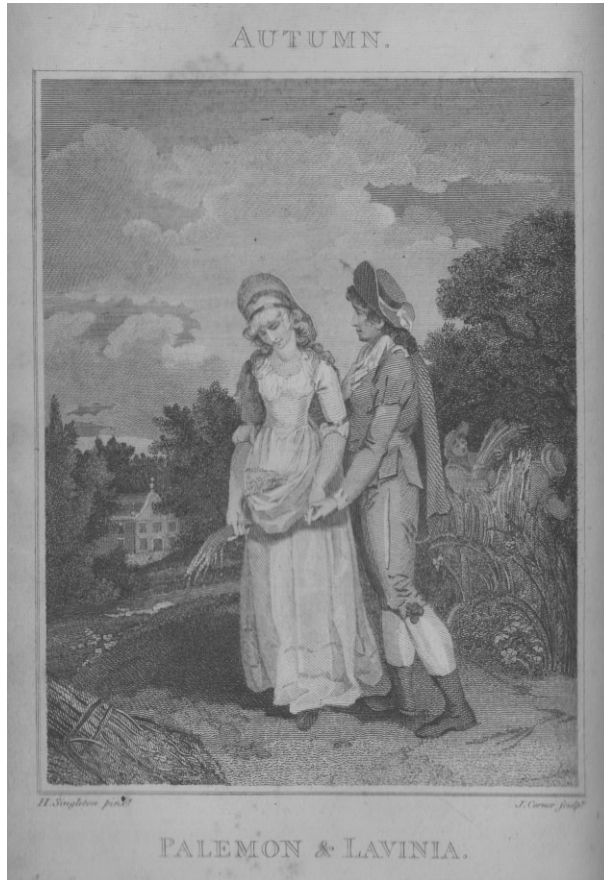
The fourteen engravings to Hamilton's edition demonstrate booksellers' continuous search, in the 1790s, for complementary formats, especially the combination of differently sized and shaped illustrations. A frontispiece engraving after a portrait of Thomson by Allan Ramsay the younger, immediately identifies the author and authenticates the edition.⁵⁰ The second engraving is located on the title page, which differs significantly from Murray's. Whereas Murray, in both 1778 and 1792, featured a sober, nicely balanced title page with the letter type set in different sizes, Hamilton introduces an ornately engraved title page with a vignette by Thomas Stothard (1755-1834).⁵¹ This vignette displays four putti, each symbolising one of the seasons. The allegorical mode of illustration, central to earlier editions of *The Seasons*, is decoratively relocated to the fringe, thus indicating the departure from the mythologising interpretation of the poem. The remaining engravings were a combination of head- and tailpieces and full-page plates. The vignettes to 'Autumn' portray a loaded hay wagon with field labourers following in its tracks and a hunter accompanied by his dogs. Even though these illustrations do not directly refer to a specific passage of the poem, unlike Metz's illustrations, they share the generalising tendency to represent scenes typical of the season.

The final four engravings depicting well-known passages from the poem were based on designs by Henry Singleton (1766-1839), who specialised in sentimental, moral and literary genre scenes. The 'Autumn' engraving provides the reader with a visual representation of Palemon and Lavinia. A comparison of this engraving to Hamilton's illustration for the 1778 Murray edition reveals two diverging interpretations of Thomson's reworking of the



3a. Full-page plate by Archibald Hamilton, engraved by James Caldwell, for 'Autumn', from *The Seasons* (London: printed for John Murray, 1778). Reproduced from a copy in the author's possession

Biblical story of Ruth and Boaz (Figs 3a and b). Hamilton presents the reader with a moralising picture of the story. On the one hand, he highlights the class distinction between Palemon, with his easily recognisable aristocratic garb, and Lavinia and the other gleaners, characterised by their plain clothing. On the other, the theme of loyal love is central to Hamilton's pictorial interpretation of the episode. Palemon is depicted as he confidently gestures towards the surrounding fields, which he offers to the modest Lavinia. In the foreground a dog, as a symbol of faithfulness and loyalty, is depicted. Singleton's illustration offers a different reading of the episode. The class distinction between the lovers is eliminated, as both Palemon and Lavinia are depicted in refined garments. Lavinia is no longer realistically rendered as engaging in manual labour: her clothes are too refined, and the gleaned crop functions only as a prop of recognition. Moreover, the engraving provides a more intimate depiction of the two characters, with Palemon



3b. Full-page plate by Henry Singleton, engraved by Corner, for 'Autumn', from *The Seasons* (London: printed for A. Hamilton, 1793). Reproduced from a copy in the author's possession

expressing his love for Lavinia by holding his right hand to his heart while tentatively taking hold of her hand with his left. Hamilton's illustration adheres more closely to the moral message of class-transcending love originally introduced by Thomson, an aspect that is confirmed by the accompanying caption. The relation of Singleton's illustration to the text of the poem is significantly less faithful, as the scene has been adjusted to appeal to the reader's gentility and to evoke a feeling of sentimentality.

For the textual additions to his edition of *The Seasons*, Hamilton relied on Percival Stockdale (1736-1811), with whom he had collaborated in the context of the editorship of the *Critical Review* and the *Universal Magazine*. Stockdale had first established a reputation for himself as a literary critic through *An Enquiry into the Nature and Genuine Laws of Poetry, Including a Particular Defence of the Writing and Genius of Mr. Pope* (1778), in response to Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (1756). Since copyright restrictions prevented the reprinting of Aikin's essay, Stockdale was obliged to look for new ways to inform the consumer's reading of Thomson's poem. In the first place, he introduced a

life of Thomson. An important means for readers to engage more critically with authors from the past, biographies provided readers with contextual information about the author's life and works while also commenting on the latter's merits. Instead of incorporating Murdoch's biography, Stockdale chose Samuel Johnson's 'Life of Thomson' from the *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1781).

The decision to incorporate Johnson's account is surprising, considering that Stockdale was not on good terms with his fellow critic. In 1779 he had missed out on the opportunity to edit a series of affordable editions of the English poets, because the booksellers chose to contract Johnson instead. As a result, Stockdale became a bitter rival and strong critic of Johnson and his work, reproaching the latter especially for his prejudiced and conservative mentality in writing the *Lives*.⁵² He would oppose Johnson's literary-critical legacy most vehemently in his *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets* (1807). The epigraph confirms that the *Lectures* were conceived as a conscious riposte to Johnson's *Lives*,⁵³ while Stockdale, throughout the work, fashions himself as the true defender of the British poetic tradition against the influence of 'our great literary dictator'.⁵⁴

Stockdale's opposition to and rejection of Johnson's biographical method are visible in his reworking of Johnson's life of Thomson, as well as in the critical notes to Hamilton's edition of *The Seasons*. The most profound change Stockdale made to Johnson's original text was the deletion of several sections that were critical of Thomson and his works. Reporting on the production of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, Thomson's popular tragedy of 1745, Stockdale ignores Johnson's scepticism about Thomson's skills as a writer of tragedy: 'it may be doubted whether he was, either by the bent of nature or habits of study, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much sense of the pathetic, and his diffusive and descriptive style produced declamation rather than dialogue'.⁵⁵ In his notes Stockdale repudiates his rival's infamous critique that 'the great defect of the Seasons, is, want of method'⁵⁶ as 'absolute nonsense' and supports his claim with a positive evaluation of the ways in which 'the poet surveys, paints, and enforces with a glowing, and animated pencil, with an affecting, and sublime morality, and religion, a Summer's morning, noon, evening, and night, as they succeed one another, in the course of nature'.⁵⁷ Even though both literary critics acknowledged the cultural value of Thomson's poetry, Stockdale uses this opportunity to produce a critical intervention against Johnson's biography and moralising evaluation, which was increasingly invoked as the authoritative account on Thomson's life and works.

Apart from providing a historical document on a rivalry between two literary critics, Stockdale's notes are also revealing of contemporaneous reading strategies towards *The Seasons*. Since Murray's 1778 edition had been issued at a time when booksellers were still exploring which works – now no longer protected by perpetual copyright – would sell best, Aikin's essay was intended to make Thomson's poem accessible to as wide a readership as possible to boost sales. By the 1790s, however, the marketability of *The Seasons* had been validated by the popularity of editions issued in the previous decades. As a result, Thomson had been mythified as a literary genius, and *The Seasons* had been attributed a place in the economically defined literary canon.⁵⁸

Stockdale's notes are symptomatic of the fragmentary reading to which the poem was subjected at the end of the eighteenth century. With its status established and recognised, it was increasingly perceived as a collection of individual sections which could be read separately.⁵⁹ Inevitably, certain passages were better appreciated and read more frequently than others. Illustrators' departure from Kent's holistic representations of the seasons in preference of renderings of scenes drawn from the interpolated episodes is a first indication of this fragmentary approach to *The Seasons*. The inclusion of certain passages of the

poem in literary anthologies, such as *Roach's Beauties of the Modern Poets of Great Britain Carefully Selected and Arranged in Six Volumes*, confirms the changed engagement with the poem.⁶⁰ Stockdale's appendages to the edition also encourage a fragmentary reading of Thomson's work. In the notes he selects a number of 'pathetick' and 'remarkably beautiful'⁶¹ passages deserving of the reader's attention: comments are made on the four highly popular interpolated episodes and other well-known passages, such as the contrasting description of passionate versus pure love at the end of 'Spring'. The index and glossary provide an extensive alphabetical list of the subjects treated in the poem and their respective line references, enabling readers easily to locate the desired passages for a selective perusal of the poem.

Hamilton's edition – even more than Murray's – was carefully designed to reflect and at the same time enhance the cultural status of *The Seasons*. The dedication to the earl of Buchan and the subscription list were additional marketing devices to increase the prestige of the edition. The official approval of a high-ranking individual and prominent Thomson enthusiast, as well as the subscribers' endorsement of the publishing venture, highlighted the edition's exceptionality and facilitated a symbolical confirmation of the cultural capital of *The Seasons*. The public recognition of the edition similarly applied to Stockdale's critical apparatus, thus adding to his attempts at establishing his critical legacy.⁶²

V. Morison's Scottish Recasting of Thomson

While Murray's and Hamilton's editions are indicative of prevailing editorialising practices and consumer attitudes to *The Seasons* in London in the 1790s, Morison's edition represents a more ambitious venture, in that it was part of a broader cultural programme. Based in Perth, one of the 'important centers for publishing the new books of the Scottish Enlightenment',⁶³ the booksellers Robert Morison Sr (1722-1791) and Jr (1764-1853) had by the late eighteenth century established one of the largest publishing businesses in Scotland, mostly by means of reprinting English and Scottish literary texts. In the 1780s, in response to contemporary efforts by Scottish intellectuals such as Hugh Blair and Lord Kames to promote a Scottish cultural heritage, they produced a five-volume series of 'The Scottish [*sic*] Poets' (1786-9), so as to contribute to the development of a distinctly national canon of Scottish literature.⁶⁴

The Seasons became a central text in the Morisons' cultural patriotic publishing programme. Not only did they issue the poem in quarto format in 1793, but they also produced an illustrated two-volume duodecimo edition in 1790, a revised version of which appeared in 1794. Whereas the earlier edition was still closely modelled on English examples – it featured the frequently recurring phrase 'with [Thomson's] last corrections and improvements' in its title page and reprinted both Murdoch's biography and Collins's ode, the updated edition represented a distinctly Scottish alternative to affordable English editions of Thomson's poem. Announcing itself on the title page as 'A New Edition', it included both 'An Original Life of the Author' and 'A Critical Essay on *The Seasons*', which the Morisons had commissioned for their quarto edition.

Morison's 1793 edition of *The Seasons* represented, at the time, an apex of Scottish reprints of Thomson's poem and of Scottish print culture in general. This edition, just like Hamilton's, was issued in subscription format, but in four instalments rather than five. A paper wrapper, used to distribute the first instalment, indicates that the edition cost 5s. 3d. per issue for subscribers and 7s. 6d. for non-subscribers.⁶⁵ Originally, the whole was offered

to subscribers at the cost of £1, but by the time the first instalment was issued, the total expenses had already run significantly higher, inducing the publisher to raise the subscription price to £1 10s. The rising costs reveal that Morison did not shy away from considerable expense in his attempt to monumentalise Thomson by producing one of the most pervasive high-cultural editions of *The Seasons*.

The textual paraphernalia in the quarto edition, more explicitly than in Murray's and Hamilton's editions, constitute an editorial matrix that refashions Thomson's poem as an important milestone in Scottish literary history. In the dedication to the edition the Morisons emphasised the ways in which the poem had contributed to the development of a Scottish cultural heritage. The dedicatee was Dr Hugh Blair (1718-1800), emeritus professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres at the University of Edinburgh. An influential Church of Scotland minister who had developed a keen interest in culture and literature, Blair was closely associated with intellectual clubs and circles propagating a culture of politeness and sophistication in Scotland's capital. He had established himself as an international literary critic through his active promotion of Ossian's poetry in the 1760s.⁶⁶ In 1783 he had established a new paradigm for the study of rhetoric and literary criticism in Scotland with his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. Blair's theories on taste, criticism, language, style and elegance, together with his recognition of indigenous, often oral, traditions of literature, contributed greatly to the development of a Scottish cultural nationalism, which attempted to define a national cultural identity within an expanding British empire.⁶⁷ Morison's edition is dedicated to Blair, both in his capacity as a propagator of a Scottish cultural heritage and as an instructor of the Scottish people.⁶⁸ Acknowledging Scotland's cultural and literary emancipation in the last decades of the eighteenth century, the Morisons depict Thomson as the first Scotsman who 'had distinguished himself by elegant, English composition', in the process freeing Scottish literature from 'those peculiarities of dialect' which had long been held in disdain in the south.⁶⁹ Sher confirms that the publication of *The Seasons* occurred at a time when Scottish expatriates such as Millar and the printer William Strahan (formerly Strachan) invested in 'patriotic publishing' 'to promote Scotland's genius and glory'.⁷⁰ In this context, *The Seasons* is read as a work that introduced a gradual diffusion of 'the taste for polite writing' and as promoting 'correctness, regularity, and grace' in Scotland.⁷¹

Morison's promotion of Thomson as a central figure for the cultural emancipation of Scotland is further developed in Robert Heron's biography of Thomson and his critical essay to *The Seasons*. Heron (1764-1807), a former assistant to Blair, had already written a preface for another edition of the poem, produced in Edinburgh in 1789 by P. Hill. The scope of his contributions to Morison's edition in 1793 was far more substantial and ambitious, however. Consisting of fifty-two pages and including a number of authentic letters, Heron's account of Thomson's life was the most comprehensive biography of the author ever to have been produced.⁷² Commenting on the merits of *The Seasons*, he discusses the ways in which Thomson negotiated innate poetic talents with a thorough knowledge and good command of the mechanical properties of poetry. The key to the poem's success he attributes to Thomson's Scottish background:

The scenery of his native situation might impress his youthful imagination with the elements of those enchanting pictures of rural nature which he afterwards produced through his works; and, he might catch from his mother the infection of that tender sensibility, and that affecting piety which all his writings breathe.⁷³

In his critical essay Heron defines descriptive poetry within a general consideration of poetry, ranking the genre as second only to the epic. The subsequent discussion of the

individual seasons and his comparison of *The Seasons* to both historical and contemporary works of literature is supported by references to literary critics such as Johnson and the Warton brothers, by means of which Heron developed a comprehensive theoretical, as well as historical, framework to evaluate Thomson's poetic achievements.

Morison not only constructed a Scottish canonical reputation for Thomson in the textual paraphernalia but also, at the same time, aimed to monumentalise the poet through the print-material execution of the edition. Sandro Jung has indicated that 'Scottish booksellers, especially after the mid-1770s, invested in the physical quality of their publications by utilizing improvements in copper-plate engraving and printing, as well as type-founding'.⁷⁴ Owing to the material sophistication and the diligence with which it was produced, the edition represented a masterpiece of Scottish print culture. The Morisons, in their dedication to Blair, also explicitly draw attention to their efforts in producing a high-quality edition of *The Seasons*: 'In the present edition, we have endeavoured to give it every recommendation which can be derived from valuable Engravings, beauty of paper, elegance of type, and correctness of printing'.⁷⁵

The illustrations to the editions confirm that the Morisons wanted to pay tribute to Thomson by producing one of the most pervasive high-cultural renderings of the poem. As the wrapper indicates, the buyer of the edition could choose not to have the plates bound into the actual book but to keep them as a furniture prints to be put on display in the home instead.⁷⁶ The illustrations, eight in total, to the quarto edition thus represented a significant expansion on the duodecimo edition, which was adorned with only three, less sophisticatedly executed, engravings.⁷⁷ Moreover, the already elaborate plates to the 1793 edition were also made available in colour versions, making this book venture the first coloured edition of *The Seasons* in the eighteenth century.

The frontispiece portrait to the edition provides another instance of the ways in which Morison departed from his English predecessors to memorialise Thomson as a Scottish author. Rather than reproducing Patoun's or Aikman's neo-classical image of Thomson, dressed in a velvet turban, a linen shirt and silk drapery, Morison introduces an entirely new portrait, which far exceeds the conventional frontispiece's purposed marking of identification and authenticity (Fig. 4). Thomson is dressed in a wig and a more formal coat, his head raised upwards and his gaze confidently fixed in the distance, as if focused on the future. The author of *The Seasons* is here represented with an enhanced sense of sophistication and professionalism, and is designated as a national symbol of Scottish literariness. The iconography surrounding the portrait enhances the cultural importance of Thomson's status as the canonical poet of *The Seasons*. Whereas in most frontispiece engravings the oval frame containing Thomson's portrait stands alone, occasionally topped with a laurel crown symbolising his poetic achievements, the portrait in Morison's edition is part of a bust-like structure, which is surrounded by visual components representing the four seasons. At the top of the emblem frame, a sickle holds in place a rich crown of fruits and crops symbolising the harvest activities central to autumn. The remaining seasons are represented in three oval emblems in the foot of the bust after designs by Stothard.⁷⁸ The frontispiece, together with a design of another Thomson memorial which never materialised, monumentalises the author in his status as the poet of *The Seasons*.

The remaining plates to the edition, produced after designs by Charles Catton (1756-1819) and Richard Corbould (1757-1831), even though they thematically corresponded with their southern predecessors, were strikingly differentiated from the English tradition in terms of their landscape representations. Compared with the illustrations to Murray's and Hamilton's editions, where nature serves as a nondescript background for



4. Frontispiece plate engraved by Pyet, from *The Seasons* (Perth: printed for R. Morison and Son, 1793). Reproduced, with permission, from a copy belonging to Professor Sandro Jung

sentimental tableaux, the landscape features more prominently in Catton's and Corbould's designs. The illustrators develop a more dynamic view of nature, characterised by imposing mountains and raging sea storms. By depicting the landscape in this manner, the illustrators adhered more closely to the (Scottish) image of nature that Thomson originally constructed in *The Seasons*.

VI. Conclusion

The editions of *The Seasons* discussed in this article were products of the commoditisation impulses affecting the British book trade's exploitation of Thomson's work and its subsequent transformation into a cultural classic. To enhance the attractiveness and the market value of their editions, the booksellers diversified the material design and execution of their editions as well as the print-cultural matrix within which they embedded Thomson's poem. Including distinct textual and visual paraphernalia, they refashioned the original text in

response to changes in consumer culture. John Murray's revision of his 1778 edition of *The Seasons* in 1792 indicates the ways in which booksellers used added material – Aikin's popular essay in Murray's case – as a trademark for their publishing ventures. The illustrations included in the editions provide insights into the various iconographic transformations of Thomson's poem in the 1790s. The editorial strategies devised by the producers of the editions not only facilitated the construction of specific reputations of the poem and its author but also enabled editors to develop an intervention in the field of literary criticism. The Morison edition provides a suitable example of the ways in which Scottish booksellers wanted to establish a print-cultural programme of cultural advancement, thus influencing the formation of a Scottish Enlightenment canon. Each of the editions met with success on the market, as indicated by their print-cultural impact on later productions of *The Seasons*.⁷⁹ Murray's, Hamilton's and Morison's editions thus became part of the rich field of cultural productions fed by *The Seasons*, providing new interpretations of, and further enhancing, the popularity and canonisation of Thomson's descriptive poem.

NOTES

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1. Beckett had bought a share of the copyrights to *The Seasons* at an auction held on 13 June 1769, after the death of Millar. L. Ray Patterson and Stanley W. Lindberg, *The Nature of Copyright: A Law of Users's Rights* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p.36. Donaldson, who had opened a bookshop in the centre of London, posed a serious threat to the established members of the Stationers' Company, since he was selling books at 30-50 per cent under the usual prices. Alexander Donaldson, *Some Thoughts on the State of Literary Property* (London: printed for Alexander Donaldson, 1764), p.24.

2. Ronan Deazley, *On The Origin of the Right to Copy: Charting the Movement of Copyright Law in Eighteenth-Century Britain (1695-1775)* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2004), p.216.

3. James Thomson. *The Seasons* (London: printed for J. Murray, 1792).

4. James Thomson. *The Seasons* (London: printed for A. Hamilton, 1793).

5. James Thomson. *The Seasons* (Perth: printed for R. Morison and Son, 1793).

6. Sher has extensively explored the production, dissemination and influence of Scottish Enlightenment thought on the Anglo-Scottish book market in his seminal book *The Enlightenment & the Book: Scottish Authors & Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, & America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006). See especially Chapter 5 for a discussion of the rapidly expanding Scottish book market after the lapse of copyright in 1774.

7. William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.III.

8. John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (London: Routledge, 1988), p.82.

9. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p.141-3.

10. Barbara M. Benedict, 'Writing on Writing: Representations of the Book in Eighteenth-Century Literature', in Laura L. Runge and Pat Rogers (eds), *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book: Writers and Publishers in England, 1650-1800* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2009), p.279-80.

11. *Sun* (14 January 1796).

12. *General Evening Post* (1 January 1793).

13. James Raven, 'The Book Trades', in Isabel Rivers (ed.), *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London: Continuum, 2001), p.6-9.

14. Wove paper provided publishers with an alternative to laid paper, which was characterised by a coarser quality and which was less ink-absorbent.

15. *General Evening Post* (1 January 1793).

16. Ralph Cohen provides an extensive, yet incomplete, list of editions of *The Seasons* and of collected works by Thomson in *The Art of Discrimination: Thomson's 'The Seasons' and the Art of Discrimination* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p.472-507.

17. Thomson had sold the copyright for *Summer, Autumn and Winter* to Millar on 18 July 1729 and the copyright for *Spring* to Andrew Millar on 16 January 1730. See James Sambrook, introduction to *The Seasons*, by James Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p.xlvii.

18. *Winter, Summer* and *Spring* had been published as separate book ventures respectively in 1726, 1727 and 1728. *Autumn* was published for the first time in the collected editions of *The Seasons* in 1730.

19. Sandro Jung has examined Woollett's print in relation with other visual renderings of the episode of Celadon and Amelia in 'Painterly "Readings" of *The Seasons*, 1766-1829', *Word & Image* 26 (2010).

20. The biography and the ode were included in subsequent editions of *The Seasons* and Thomson's collected *Works*. They also featured in French and German editions of *The Seasons*, either in their original form or in a translated version.

21. For a discussion of the most important illustrated, high-cultural editions of British editions of *The Seasons* in the 1790s, see Sandro Jung, 'Print Culture, High-Cultural Consumption, and Thomson's *The Seasons*, 1780-1797', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 44:4 (2011).

22. *The Border Tour throughout the Most Important and Interesting Places in the Counties of Northumberland, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirk. By a Tourist* (Edinburgh: printed for Walter Grieve et al., 1826), p.64. William Howitt's account of his visit to Ednam in 1847 suggests that the annual celebration will not have taken place much longer, since he reports that it 'ha[s] long fallen into desuetude'. William Howitt, in *Homes and Haunts of the Most Eminent British Poets* (London: printed for Richard Bentley), p.215.

23. For more information on the collaboration between the earl of Buchan and Bodoni, see Brian Hillyard, 'David Steuart and Giambattista Bodoni: On the Fringes of the British Book Trade', in John Hinks et al. (eds), *Worlds of Print: Diversity in the Book Trade* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2006).

24. Jung offers an in-depth study of colour-illustrated editions of *The Seasons* in Sandro Jung, 'Packaging, Design and Colour: From Fine-Printed to Small-Format Editions of Thomson's *The Seasons*, 1793-1802', *Essays and Studies* 66 (2013).

25. *Diary or Woodfall's Register* (12 April 1792).

26. Tomkins had been circulating proposals as early as 1787 (*World*, 12 April 1787).

27. The specimen, selling at 3d., was produced and distributed by a number of Scottish booksellers in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, as well as a London collaborator (T. Kay).

28. *Sun* (14 January 1796).

29. William Zachs, *The First John Murray and the Late Eighteenth-Century London Book Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.184.

30. *General Evening Post* (3 September 1778).

31. H. A Hammelmann, 'The Poet's Seasons Delineated', *Country Life Annual* (1970), p.52-4.

32. Sandro Jung, 'Visual Interpretations, Print, and Illustrations of Thomson's *The Seasons*, 1730-1797', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 34 (2010), p.28.

33. Hamilton would produce three different sets of illustrations for editions of *The Seasons*: Murray's octavo edition, here under discussion; Tomkins's expensive folio edition, issued in 1797; and an 1802 edition in large octavo format, produced by Francis DuRoveray. Moreover, Hamilton would also contribute to the lucrative ephemeral market of furniture prints to be put on display in the home. See Jung, 'High-Cultural Consumption', p.505-7.

34. Philip Connell embeds his discussion of the memorial within a general consideration of the literary monuments in Westminster Abbey and their influence on the creation of a national cultural canon in 'Death and the Author: Westminster Abbey and the Meanings of the Literary Monument', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38:4 (2005), p.573-6.

35. Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p.xviii.

36. For a detailed examination of illustration practices in editions of *The Seasons*, see Jung, 'Painterly "Readings"', 'Visual Interpretations' and 'The Visual "Life" of James Thomson's *The Seasons*, 1730-c.1800', in David Ten Eyck (ed.), *Book Practices & Textual Itineraries: Tracing the Contours of Literary Works* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2011).

37. Hammelmann, 'The Poet's Seasons Delineated', p.54.

38. Zachs, *The First John Murray*, p.284, 388.

39. In recent years scholars have increasingly re-examined book illustrations to consider the print-cultural dissemination and reception of literary works in the eighteenth century. See Jung's extensive work on *The Seasons*; Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, 'Pamela' in the Marketplace: *Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

40. Antonia Forster discusses the impact of review journals on the development of a shared taste among consumers in 'Review Journals and the Reading Public', in Isabel Rivers (ed.), *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* (London: Continuum, 2001).

41. James Thomson, *The Seasons* (London: printed for J. French, 1777), p.190.

42. For a comprehensive overview of the developments in the literary market-place and its implications on readership before and after 1774, see St Clair, *The Reading Nation*, especially Chapters 5 and 6.

43. John Aikin, *An Essay on the Application of Natural History to Poetry* (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1777), p.57.

44. John Aikin, *Letters To a Young Lady on a Course of English Poetry* (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1804), p.2.

45. Zachs, *The First John Murray*, p.345.

46. Zachs, *The First John Murray*, p.284.

47. *Morning Chronicle* (23 November 1791).

48. The popularity of Aikin's essay is also confirmed through its inclusion and translation in editions of *The Seasons* published in continental Europe. It was included in its original version in 1790 and 1794 in an edition published by J. J. C. Timaeus in Leipzig. For more information on Timaeus's production, see Sandro Jung, 'Print Culture and Visual Interpretation in Eighteenth-Century German Editions of Thomson's *The Seasons*', *Comparative Critical Studies* 9:1 (2012), p.51-3. The essay was also translated for inclusion in a Dutch translation by Joannes Lublink den Jongen, published in Amsterdam in 1787.

49. *Morning Chronicle* (15 February 1793).

50. Millar had been the first to introduce an engraving of the author by James Basire (1730-1802) after a portrait by John Patoun in his 1746 quarto edition of *The Seasons*. Patoun's image, together with William Aikman's rejuvenating portrait produced in 1726, were the most frequently recurring authorial representations of Thomson in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editions of *The Seasons*.

51. Stothard, a prolific book illustrator who had been producing engravings for literary classics since the 1780s, designed multiple sets of illustrations of *The Seasons*: he designed fourteen engravings for a pocket edition issued by John Stockdale in 1794; he also provided two different sets of illustrations for *The Royal Engagement Pocket Atlas* in 1793 and 1796. See Sandro Jung, 'Print Culture, Marketing, and Thomas Stothard's Illustrations for *The Royal Engagement Pocket Atlas, 1779-1826*', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 41 (2012).

52. Howard D. Weinbrot discusses the antagonistic relationship between Johnson and Stockdale in 'Samuel Johnson, Percival Stockdale, and Brick-Brats from Grubstreet: Some Later Response to the *Lives of the Poets*', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 56:2 (1993).

53. 'Johnson, with admiration oft I see / The Critick and the Bard conjoined in thee: / But prejudices, too, as oft I find, / Corrupt, debase, mislead thy noble mind. / Hence, against thee, I seize the cause of truth: / A cause that I adored, from early youth. / Oh! may her voice inspire my latest breath! / And soothe reflexion in the hour of death!'

54. Percival Stockdale, *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets*, vol. I (London: printed for the author, 1807), p.101.

55. Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on Their Works*, ed. Roger Lonsdale, vol. IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p.100-01.

56. London: Hamilton, 1793, notes, n.p.

57. London: Hamilton, 1793, notes, n.p.

58. In adopting an economic conceptualisation of the eighteenth-century canon, I adhere to book-historical and print-cultural paradigms, as developed by Trevor Ross in *The Making of the English Literary Canon: From the Middle Ages to the Late Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), Jonathan Kramnick in *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and St Clair, *The Reading Nation*, especially Chapter 7.

59. The practice of engaging with *The Seasons* in a fragmentary reading was inherent to Thomson's composition of the poem. For a detailed consideration of Thomson's creation of a new, fragmentary genre in his complex long poem, see Sandro Jung, *The Fragmentary Poetic: Eighteenth-Century Uses of an Experimental Mode* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2009), especially Chapter 3.

60. Stefanie Lethbridge attributes the selective perusal of the poem to the popularity of literary anthologies in 'Anthological Reading Habits in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of Thomson's *Seasons*', in Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Stefanie Lethbridge (eds), *Anthologies of British Literature: Critical Perspectives from Literary and Cultural Studies* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000).

61. London: Hamilton, 1793, notes.

62. Stockdale's editorial approach towards *The Seasons* and his attacks on Johnson's legacy should be considered within the broader context of eighteenth-century debates on the editing of – especially vernacular – texts, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Shakespeare's works. See Marcus Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton and Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing: The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and Fiona Ritchie, 'Shakespeare', in Jack Lynch (ed.), *Samuel Johnson in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

63. Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book*, p.268.

64. Jung has recently examined in great detail the Morisons's Scottish print-cultural publishing projects in "A Scotch Poetical Library": Print Culture, and the Construction of an Enlightenment Scottish Literary Canon', *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* (forthcoming).

65. A copy of Morison's edition in its original wrappers is held at the National Library of Scotland, shelfmark Bdg.m.90.

66. Blair commissioned the publication of and wrote the preface for James Macpherson's supposed translation of the poetry of the ancient Celtic bard. With the publication of *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal*, issued in quarto format in London in 1763, Blair launched himself on the international scene and became a staunch defender of the authenticity of the Ossianic poems as an invaluable part of Scotland's cultural heritage.

67. Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p.44. Susan Manning has explored the influence of antiquarian practices on the development of post-Enlightenment literary historiography in late eighteenth-century Scotland in 'Antiquari-

anism, the Scottish Science of Man, and the Emergence of Modern Disciplinary', in Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen (eds), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

68. Perth: Morison, 1793, p.5.

69. Perth: Morison, 1793, p.3-4.

70. Sher, *The Enlightenment & the Book*, p.305.

71. Perth: Morison, 1793, p.4.

72. Heron not only consulted Murdoch's and Johnson's biographies, but also incorporated material from James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791) and from the earl of Buchan's extensive biographical research, which had been published together with a number of letters and unpublished material in *Essays on the Lives and Writings of Fletcher of Saltoun and the Poet Thomson: Biographical, Critical, and Political* (1792).

73. Perth: Morison, 1793, p.v.

74. Jung, 'The Construction of an Enlightenment Scottish Literary Canon'.

75. Perth: Morison, 1793, p.5-6.

76. By providing their buyers with the opportunity to frame the illustrations as furniture prints, the Morisons were tapping into a niche market of elite print commodities surrounding Thomson's poem, important contributors to which were William Hamilton and Angelica Kauffman. See Jung, 'High-Cultural Consumption', p.505-11.

77. Apart from a frontispiece portrait of the author, the duodecimo edition included a rendering of the dramatic conclusion to the tragic tale of Celadon and Amelia and a portrait of Lavinia.

78. The scenes depicted in the emblems were after designs by Stothard for the 1793 issue of Baker's *Royal Engagement Pocket Atlas*.

79. Murray's revised edition was reissued twice afterwards: once in 1793 by Murray himself; once in 1794 by Thomas Cadell, partner and successor to Millar's business. Moreover, the engraving to 'Spring' would be reused in a French translation of *The Seasons*, produced in 1806 by a conger of Paris booksellers, 'Levrault, Schoell et Comp.'. After Hamilton's death in 1793, T. Chapman, the original printer of the edition, bought the bookseller's stock in trade and reissued the edition in 1795 without the full-page engravings after Singleton's designs. Stockdale's index and glossary were reused several times in the nineteenth century: for instance, by James Wallis in 1805. As a result of Morison's Scottish refashioning of *The Seasons*, later biographies of Thomson frequently referred to the influence of the Scottish landscape on his natural descriptions or to the mother instilling sentimentality into the poet's mind during his childhood.

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