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Preface

Measured by any standard, one of the most popular publications of the eighteenth century was a long didactic poem by a long-forgotten physician—and it remains a key document in the cultural, social, and medical history of the Enlightenment.[1] This edition of John Armstrong's *The Art of Preserving Health* furnishes a critical text with a historical introduction to the poem and its author, edited texts selected from medical and literary documents of the period. This Preface explains why we should return to Armstrong, and indeed why we should do so with reference to the Contextual Documents that are featured in the pages that follow.

The Art of Preserving Health largely remains overlooked, even by most students of the eighteenth century, a hardcover edition of 1979 notwithstanding. But for more than a century after its appearance in 1744 it was praised by critics, cited approvingly by physicians, pirated widely by booksellers, quoted by diarists, and celebrated by generations of readers in Britain, America, and on the Continent. It was reprinted, all 1,700 lines of it, in the various multivolume Libraries of British Poetry that filled the shelves of early nineteenth century homes and in turn defined the classics of British literature. The lucrative copyright for *The Art of Preserving Health* was coveted by the London-based Scottish bookseller Andrew Millar (who also published the great poems of James Thomson and Edward Young, and the bestselling novels of Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson), and in America it was for years the only work of literature or medicine to be sold by Benjamin Franklin. Readers commanded dozens of editions, printed on fine and cheap paper, bound in every format. Numerous translations were commissioned by publishers in France, Italy, and Switzerland. The changing tastes, interests, and education of readers help to explain why this poem has been neglected for so long, but they cannot detract from its historical importance.

John Armstrong (1709–79) was the first to graduate *insignitus* ("with distinction") from Edinburgh's new medical school, in 1732. Following his friend James Thomson and encouraged by the entrepreneurial David Mallet (née Malloch), Armstrong arrived in London soon afterward. But London's Royal College of Physicians judged Edinburgh a "foreign" university awarding inferior degrees—so Armstrong was denied a license to practice legally in Britain's most lucrative medical marketplace. On the advice of his Scottish friends, Armstrong took up his pen to display his credentials and attract potential patients. But turning to print was risky, particularly for physicians, for it could initiate a damaging pamphlet-war.[2] Even with Swift and Pope in declining health, poetry remained a

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[1] For references not footnoted in the Preface, see the General Introduction.

[2] Holmes indicates that "medicine was beyond comparison the most pamphlet-ridden of the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century professions. From the avalanche of writings issuing from the leading polemicists among the physicians, apothecaries and surgeons of

powerful form of public expression that could make or break careers. Pope had recently made the chilling claim:

> Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see
> Men not afraid of God afraid of me. ("Epilogue to the Satires" 2: 208–9)

But Armstrong's adoption of blank verse addressed potential patients directly, eliding critics whose attacks engaged only with prose, and escaping the "poetic warfare" of heroic couplets.[3] His poem offers us a perfect merger of what Helen Deutsch has described as "[the] parallel processes of professionalization and popularization" required both of authors and physicians in Britain at this time.[4] Armstrong's welcome depiction of a sensitive doctor writing directly to his ailing patients marketed new thinking to English readers, cultivated at Edinburgh's consumer-driven medical school, reflecting a new appreciation of the exchange-based relationship between those who provide and those who seek medical expertise. *The Art of Preserving Health* illustrates social and cultural reasons why the innovative course of training at Edinburgh threatened London's medical elites.

Armstrong's evocation of emotional and physical experience displayed his professional manner to an increasingly literate public. Doing this through an imitation of Virgil's *Georgics* was also culturally savvy. Readers were enjoying a resurgent enthusiasm for the *Georgics* among critics, translators, poets, and even scientists.[5] Addison had explained why the georgic was the best model for didactic poetry: "where the Prose-writer tells us plainly what ought to be done, the Poet often conceals the Precept in a description, and represents his Country-Man performing the Action in which he wou'd instruct his Reader." This meant that "the georgic mode," coupled with sensitive description of emotional and

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Augustan England, one might well conclude that the pen was considered to be far mightier than the prescription, the powder and the poultice." See G. Holmes, *Augustan England: Professions, State and Society, 1680–1730* (New York: Harper, 1982) 167.

[3] On the metrical strictures of "poetic warfare," see Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681–1714*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 135–72; 177–8.

[4] See Helen Deutsch, "Symptomatic Correspondences: The Author's Case in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Cultural Critique* 42 (Spring 1999): 36. In Scotland, professorial physicians were paid by students through lecture fees, which was far more lucrative than writing books—especially books that put those lectures into cheap print. Since no formal medical lectures were offered at Oxford or Cambridge during the first half of the eighteenth century, and professors there were not paid on a per-student basis anyway, medical popularization through print carried very different professional consequences in England. This is the primary reason why Edinburgh's greatest medical teachers, including Alexander Monro *primus,* Robert Whytt, and William Cullen were reluctant to see their lectures in print while they held professorial chairs.

[5] For an overview of the range of related works catering to the georgic vogue of this period, see John Martyn, in Contextual Documents, note 1.

physical feelings, allowed Armstrong to emphasize his subjective experience to an inclusive readership.[6] Readers of popular poets such as Anne Finch would have been familiar with poetical attempts to refine emotional sensibility by focussing on sensory experiences that register beyond words, that lead to

> … silent Musings [that] urge the Mind to seek
> Something, too high for Syllables to speak. ("Nocturnal Reverie" 41–2)

More innovative was Armstrong's attempt to cultivate his readers' physical sensibility by teaching them to identify the anatomical meaning of particular sensations—that is, to cultivate a reflective corporeal sensibility. Lest readers be troubled by the terrifying imagery of plague and fire that Armstrong had borrowed from Virgil's own model, Lucretius, he reassured them by adopting four of Galen's moderating elements for healthy living, called the "non-naturals," as titles for his poem's four books: *Air*, *Diet*, *Exercise*, and *The Passions*. These same titles structured the medical writings of countless popular authors, from the enduring Luigi Cornaro and Nicholas Culpeper to the more recent George Cheyne.[7] But only at a glance, and at a distance of some three centuries, does *The Art of Preserving Health* seem to iterate conventions.

The Art of Preserving Health continues to pose challenges for historians, especially for its now-arcane classicism and its lexical peculiarities[8]; likewise, the

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[6] For a reading of sensibility that suggests literary depictions of a "man of feeling" exclude women readers from them thus envisioning themselves, see Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) esp. 110–120. Armstrong frequently warns readers against "unmanly" habits and anticipates male readers who share his own distinctly masculine temptations, see *APH* 4: 350–370; 386. But participation in what Karen O'Brien has called "the georgic mode" invited subjective reflection without prescribing an exclusively male readership; indeed the poem was recommended by men to women readers. On the georgic mode as a kind of expansive self-understanding, see K. O'Brien, "Imperial Georgic: 1660–1789," *The Country and the City Revisited,* ed. G. Maclean et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 161. For its recommendations, see Hugh Smith, *Letters to Married Women,* (London: G. Kearsley, 1767) 236–7.

[7] By the mid-eighteenth century, Cornaro's treatise, variably titled *Discourses on a Sober and Temperate Life*, was among the most popular books ever published. For its high profile and strong praise; see Bacon, "A History of Life and Death" [1638] in *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. P. Shaw (London: Knapton et al, 1733) vol. 3, 369; Addison, *Spectator* 195 (13 Oct. 1711). An elaborate subscription-list heads a new translation of 1742: see T. Smith, trans. *Hygiasticon* (London: C. Hitch, 1742); some thirty editions of Cornaro appeared before 1791 (rivaling *APH*). More than seventy editions of Culpeper's *The English Physician* (1652) were published during the eighteenth century. On Cheyne, see prefatory note to his *Essay of Health and Long Life*, in Contextual Documents.

[8] See, for example, Anita Guerrini's speedy dismissal of the poem as a "poetic version" of Cheyne in *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 2000) 184.

text misleads literary historians by referencing events of mainly contemporary concern.[9] Indeed, Armstrong held no high ambitions for himself as a poet or as a commentator. He was writing urgently and only for readers of his time. Our historical distance risks simplifying the complexity of Armstrong's classical address to his patron:

> Nor should I wander doubtful of my way,
> Had I the lights of that sagacious mind
> Which taught to check the pestilential fire,
> And quel the deadly Python of the Nile.
> O Thou belov'd by all the graceful arts
> Thou long the fav'rite of the healing powers,
> Indulge, O MEAD! a well-design'd essay,
> Howe'er imperfect: and permit that I
> My little knowledge with my country share. (*APH* 1: 53–63)

Now the *Oxford DNB* indicates that Armstrong is appealing to Richard Mead, the great ("fav'rite") London physician and philanthropist ("belov'd by all the graceful arts") and it confirms Mead as the author of the enduringly popular *Discourse on the Plague* (that "taught to check the pestilential fire"). Less evident is the socially allusive force of these lines—for contemporary references to plagues and epidemics terrified potential patients, fellow physicians, and shook the highest levels of the British government.[10] Armstrong's very mention of "the deadly Python of the Nile" reminded readers of the alarming epidemic that ravaged Sicily only months before this poem was printed; the infection was understood to have reached Europe from Egypt. A pamphlet published within months of Armstrong's poem refers to "the very great Apprehensions and Fears which possess our Nation on Account of the present Plague" in Calabria and Cueta.[11] Richard Bradley's

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[9] For example, Bruce Boehrer correctly identifies Armstrong's many rhetorical debts to Milton, but he misunderstands Armstrong's practical instructions to readers as an effort to reach Milton's far more elevated purposes: "by appropriating patterns of digestive and excremental imagery from *Paradise Lost*, Armstrong invests solemnly in language that—as Michael Lieb has shown--operates for Milton himself largely on the level of 'cosmic realism' (128) … The apparatus of Milton's vast metaphysical drama is brought to bear on phlegm and flatulence." But Armstrong was not seeking to reach or to evoke literary greatness; his readers were seeking practical instruction provided through fashionable stylistic conventions. See B. Boeherer, "English Bards and Scotch Physicians: John Armstrong's Debt to *Paradise Lost* and the Dynamics of Literary Reception," *Milton Quarterly* 32 (Oct. 1998): 100. For an insightful discussion of Armstrong in the context of current poetic developments that also made innovative use of the georgic, see David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1789,* (London: Pearson, 2003) 97–8.

[10] Robert Walpole was forced to resign from the leadership of the government in February 1742, in part for his perceived failure to support the military in the wake of the disaster at Cartagena. See General Introduction, note 161.

[11] See *The Plague No Contagious Disease*, (London: J. Millan, 1744) 3.

Plague at Marseilles Considered provided reports that were typical in newspapers of the day, but it still passed through four editions between 1719 and 1721, and another in 1727—eight full years after that outbreak. In 1743, a new anthology of plague narratives combined classical reports with recent testimonies from Sicily; the second half of that book reprinted new Acts of Parliament intended to reassure British readers of their relative safety from Continental infections.[12]

Armstrong's reference to pestilence would also have reminded his readers of the recent catastrophe at Cartagena, in South America, that stunned Britons with a humiliating military defeat far from home, "beyond th' Atlantic foam," as Armstrong would put it later (*APH* 3: 628). It was at this point that the colonial War of Jenkins's Ear expanded into a far more bloody European conflict, the War of Austrian Succession (1739–48). But for Armstrong's first readers, the reference to pestilential fire was the most alarming point. At least 7,500 of the 10,000-strong British naval and military contingent that landed at Cartegena were struck down by yellow fever before they could engage the Spanish, let alone return to fight Spain's hostile allies in Europe. Armstrong's readers would have worried that this disaster was an omen of the future for Britain's military, for no physician could propose a cure or treatment to such fatal diseases—indeed Dr George Martine, who had also trained in Edinburgh and had attended the expedition, was killed in the epidemic. Like Armstrong, Martine had been denied a license to practice by the protectionist censors of the London College, which led to his posting on the ill-fated Cartagena expedition. So Armstrong's possessive reference to "my country" (*APH* 1: 63) challenged lingering resentment of the Acts of Union (1707) that made London a shared capital only to relegate Scots to commercial peripheries. Armstrong exposes the prejudice of the London College in his gentle appeal to the views of sympathetic readers in England and back at home in Scotland.[13] The popular resonance of *The Art of Preserving Health*, together with contextual documents that include John Tristram's *The Ill State of Physick in Great Britain*, yields insights into the shared views of authors and their readers, which they articulated through the emerging commercialization of literature and medicine.[14]

London physicians saw that their control of the medical market was shrinking well before Scottish-trained students began to arrive during the 1730s. The anonymous pamphlet *A Letter to George Cheyne* was printed twice in 1724, and reflects local physicians' anxiety about the popularization of medicine through print. For this anonymous author, the culprits were those physicians, like Cheyne,

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[12] See *The Plague* (London: F. Cogan, 1743), in Creech, Contextual Documents.

[13] Unfortunately, in the wake of Jacobite rebellion of 1745, even normally restrained journals such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* would call for "*the total extirpation*" of all Jacobite citizenry, which Howard Weinbrot interprets as a thinly veiled attack on the Scottish people. See *GM* 16 (1746): 415; H. Weinbrot, *Britannia's Issue: The Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 1.

[14] On the scholarly importance of such study, see D. Harley, "Rhetoric and the Social Construction of Sickness and Healing," *Social History of Medicine* 12 (1999): 407–35.

whose popularity as authors enabled thousands of potential patients to pay just four shillings for his book and thus to forgo the typical one-guinea (or 21 shillings) charge for a medical consultation. The author makes the important point that, since every patient is constitutionally unique, "any general Rule laid down to any number of Men … must be destructive," which is why it is medically safer for patients to retain a physician who will examine them and tailor his advice "on the conviction of his own Senses." But the *Letter* resounds with fear of the economic threat that books such as Cheyne's *Essay of Health and Long Life* posed to London's medical elite.

Cheyne had claimed his book is "careful not to incroach on the Province of the Physician," but surely this disingenuous slick-speaking offered cold comfort to his less entrepreneurial colleagues. For readers of Cheyne's *Essay of Health* called for no less than six printings in the very year it was first published, with at least ten editions appearing by 1745, creating a vogue matched only by Richardson's novel, *Pamela* (1740).[15] The *Essay* reveals the degree to which Galen's "non-naturals" were integrated into the teaching of one of the century's most mathematically inclined Newtonian physicians. It also demonstrates a conventional intertwining of medical with religious and moral instruction, which Cheyne used to serve his purpose. Adopting Biblical rhetoric and visual cues for emphasis he preached: "He that *wantonly* transgresseth the self-evident Rules of Health, is guilty of *Self-Murder*." Even the most charitable reader could assume this meant that not following Cheyne's published advice will lead to moral and physical sin of truly theological proportions.

Armstrong's poetic instructions marked a strident departure from the period's most popular text of its kind. His approach to the rules of health is far less pious, and indeed he shares its difficulty:

> 'Tis hard, in such a strife of rules, to chuse
> The best, and those of most extensive use;
> Harder in clear and animated song
> Dry philosophic precepts to convey (*APH* 1: 46–9)

Apart for Armstrong's allusion here to Virgil, whose own uncertainty at the start of the *Georgics* only encourages sympathetic attention, these lines display Armstrong's reverence for his patients. He does this by communicating his emotional vulnerability and proceeds by presenting his own physical weaknesses. Later in the poem, Armstrong goes so far to loosen assumptions about physicians' immunity from temptations. Surely the following depiction of a sore head after a long night refers to personal knowledge:

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[15] See T. Keymer and P. Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

> Soon your heaven is gone; a heavier gloom
> Shuts o'er your head: and, as the thund'ring stream,
> Swoln o'er its banks with sudden mountain rain,
> Sinks from its tumult to a silent brook;
> So, when the frantic raptures in your breast
> Subside, you languish into mortal man;
> You sleep, and waking find yourself undone. (*APH* 4: 177–83)

This degree of candid self-reflection constitutes a central element of Armstrong's instruction, as well as his gestures to classical poets who wrote on similarly challenging topics; like them, he teaches by eliciting sympathy. Two years earlier, Armstrong had displayed the practical advantages of his self-effacing approach to medical knowledge. His pioneering pediatric treatise, *A Full View of All the Diseases Incident to Children* (published anonymously, 1742) was the first book of its kind intended for lay readers who care for sick children—"the Parents, but especially Mothers." Right from the start, his Preface responds to the therapeutic worry raised by Cheyne's anonymous critic: can general advice provide an effective substitute for personal consultation? Armstrong states that the women who consult his book can be confident that his advice "is altogether founded upon Practice." In an observation that is characteristically sympathetic and practice, he points to the fact that "Children have not the Power of Speech to describe their Complaints," and that physicians are "not so clear as they could wish" when recommending treatments. Armstrong will describe the cures that have too long been held by the specialists whose "fear of doing Mischief," paradoxically, has prevented them from administering them. Referring to medical treatments, he announces, "It is entirely upon Account of those Female Practitioners, that I have put all the Formulae into English, and having set down all the Articles and their Doses at full Length." For Armstrong, popularization of medical knowledge is a humanitarian and practical matter, one that reflects the demands of patients more than the commercial worries of physicians—whether they be authors or not.

When James Boswell met with Hume in 1775, Hume said he admired "the truly classical" elements in Armstrong's poem, and they concluded that "*The Art of Preserving Health* was the most classical Poem in the English Language."[16] These days, most of the popular literature of the eighteenth century that endures beyond classrooms, from the picaresque novels of Defoe and Fielding to the Romantic poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge, can do so in part because its authors did not require a classical education of their readers. Indeed, the evocative immediacy (or the "writing to the moment") that distinguishes the sentimental novels that appeared alongside *The Art of Preserving Health* continue to attract readers in part because they employ a distinctly emotional and psychological realism. Samuel Richardson, for example, expressly designed his novels as "a new species of writing" that could appeal to as many readers as possible by adopting

[16] See *The Private Papers of James Boswell*, eds. Ralph Heyward Isham et al. (New York: W. E. Rudge, 1928–34) vol. 2, 27.

the speech, thoughts, and feelings of real people—just one reason why he always refused to call his works novels or fictions.[17] Armstrong's sophisticated blending of realistic with obscure language and classical imagery, in a poem that seeks to depict physical feeling and also to evoke emotional and intellectual responses, seems at odds with the other great didactic works of its time, and contributes to its neglect even among specialists of this period.

Armstrong's contemporaries, including Thomas Gray, William Collins, and Samuel Johnson, published poems that displayed their command of the classics by referencing their ancient models in their subtitles and by adhering closely to Latin or Greek forms.[18] Armstrong understated his debts to Virgil and Lucretius, partly because his primary concern was to win the approval of readers without classical training. At the same time, while his acute depictions of physical and visual perceptions at times suggest the "writing to the moment" familiar to readers of realistic novels, reading them as direct experience distorts their classical force:

> Thro' every nerve
> A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
> Glides o'er my frame. The forest deepens round;
> And more gigantic still th' impending trees
> Stretch their extravagant arms athwart the gloom. (*APH* 2: 366–70)

Like Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura* and Virgil in his *Georgics*, Armstrong used verse to display both his learning and his expertise by blending the language of physical feeling with mythological visions: this "sacred horror" that "thrills" depicts the amazement felt by poets touched by the divine muses who shape or distort his inspired perception of the natural world.[19] Yet these lines also depict a corporeal experience meant to teach readers to identify the first symptoms of infection; for *sacred*, according to a revived poetic convention that follows Virgil, also means "accursed"; *horror* means "shudder."[20] The sublime vision of trees extending themselves toward "the gloom" refers to other classical imitations familiar to readers of Anne Finch, whose "Nocturnal Reverie" emphasizes the imaginative consequences of acute auditory and visual sensitivity. Poems contemporary with *The Art of Preserving Health*, such as Thomson's "On Solitude" and Thomas Warton's "The Pleasures of Melancholy" required evocations of near-silence and solitude, for such conditions emphasize the poet's own corporeal feeling.

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[17] See my "Why Clarissa Must Die: Richardson's Tragedy and Editorial Heroism," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31 (Fall 2007) 1–28.

[18] See, for example, Johnson's learned imitations of Juvenal that include *London* (1738) and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749); Collins's closely Pindaric *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* (1746); and Thomas Gray's two famous Pindaric odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard" (1748).

[19] For a more recent example, see the lyrics to Leonard Cohen's popular song "The Sisters of Mercy" in *Stranger Music* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) 109–10.

[20] See *APH* 3: 506.

Armstrong used classical conventions because he understood that they lent special didactic resonance: just like the practical instructions that contemporary scientists drew from Virgil (who followed Lucretius), these lines emphasize the dangers of moist air, and as Armstrong argues throughout his poem, it is this that transmits disease.[21] And like recent medical publications that included classical and contemporary reports of disease, *The Art of Preserving Health* links current phenomena to ancient mystery—as he reveals at a particularly terrifying moment in the poem, "the salutary art was mute" as the sweating sickness raged in England (*APH* 3: 604). Only by preserving health in the present can we protect against diseases known even to the ancients. This combination of imaginative allusiveness and practical instruction comprises the classical manner that Hume and Boswell found distinctive in Armstrong.[22] This poem's illumination of contemporary social, cultural, and medical concerns retained its appeal long after it was first published, and long after it captured the attention of its lucrative first readers.

This book includes two chronological timelines (Tables 1 and 2) that chart the careers and publications of related medical, literary, and classical authors; those printed in bold are featured in this book.

[21] See F. de Bruyn, "Reading Virgil's *Georgics* as a Scientific Text: The Eighteenth-Century Debate between Jethro Tull and Stephen Switzer" *ELH* 71 (2004): 661–89.

[22] For suggestive discussions of later developments in eighteenth-century poetry and criticism, that divided Greek and Roman "classicism" from antique "Gothicism," see R. G. Terry, *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past, 1660-1781*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 286–323.

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Textual Note and Abbreviations

A bibliographical reference cites each copy-text selected for this edition, along with a prefatory biographical footnote on the author and translator (when appropriate).

Armstrong alludes frequently to Virgil's *Georgics* and to Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* ("On the Nature of Things"), and authors of the Contextual Documents gesture to a wide range of classical sources. References to Latin texts cite the Loeb editions (which appear in the footnotes and in the Bibliography), but references to Horace's *Odes* and Virgil's *Georgics* cite David Ferry's recent dual-language editions (1997 and 2005).

During the 1740s, readers could consult a number of reasonably-priced and frequently reprinted translations of Homer, Lucretius, and Virgil. By far the most popular were Alexander Pope (*Iliad* 1715–20; *Odyssey* 1726), Thomas Creech (1682), and John Dryden (1697):

Creech, trans.	*T. Lucretius Carus*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Lichfield, 1683).
Dryden, trans.	*The Works of Virgil in English*, ed. W. Frost and V. Dearing. *The Works of John Dryden* (London: U of California P, 1987) vol. 5.
Pope, *Iliad*	*The Iliad of Homer*, 5th edn [1743], ed. S. Shankman (London: Penguin, 1996).
Pope, *Odyssey*	*The Odyssey of Homer*, ed. M. Mack (New Haven: Yale UP, 1967) 2 vols.

Further abbreviations include:

Foxon	D. F. Foxon, *English Verse, 1701–50: A Catalogue of Separately Printed Poems* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 2 vols.
Johnson	Samuel Johnson, ed. *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Strahan et al, 1773) 2 vols.
Oxford DNB	*The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, updated regularly http://oxforddnb.com
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, updated regularly http://oed.com
Spectator	J. Addison et al. *The Spectator*, ed. D. F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1965) 5 vols.

Complete citations appear in the footnotes and in the Bibliography.

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This book is for Nadine, Yael, and Sadie, the loves of my life.

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General Introduction
Sensibility in Practice: Dr. John Armstrong's *The Art of Preserving Health*

During the early spring of 1764 James Boswell was lonely and miserable, forced by his father to leave his literary friends in London to study law in Utrecht. After days of wandering along the rainy streets, Boswell decided to focus his energies by translating a Scottish legal textbook into Latin. Writing in his journal, Boswell reflected on others who choose to continue to dwell on their unhappiness:

> They do not budge an inch to escape their woes. They fold their arms, they remain idle. Their blood becomes thick, their brains heavy, their thoughts dark. What a horrible situation! Dr. Armstrong, in his poem on *The Art of Preserving Health*, gives a description of that state which I have just described. He says,
>
> The prostrate soul beneath
> A load of huge Imagination heaves.
> And all the horrors that the murderer feels
> With anxious flutterings wake the guiltless breast. (4:101–4)
>
> It is impossible to translate into French his force of style, a force remarkable even in English. Rouse yourselves, wretched mortals!

These verses depict an imaginative poet sympathizing with his anxious reader—indeed its evocative power suggests that the poet himself was once thus frightened. By evoking sympathy and reflecting on its associated thoughts and feelings, Armstrong's verse led Boswell to a therapeutic understanding: the source of his distress is ultimately imaginative and not physical. Boswell quoted these lines from memory, suggesting he had resorted to Armstrong's poetical therapy before—and he would do so again in print, some years later.[12]

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[1] References to *The Art of Preserving Health* cite the first edition (London: A. Millar, 1744), as it appears in this edition; there are no significant variations among the many editions.

[2] See *Boswell in Holland, 1763–1764*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956) 240. Boswell quoted these lines again in 1775, telling readers of the *London Magazine* that he "admires the expression very much," because they suggest a fellowship among similarly afflicted readers: see *The Hypochondriack*, by James Boswell, ed. Margery Bailey, vol. 1, 2 vols (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1928) 139. The final line should read, "With anxious flutterings wake the guiltless breast."

Challenging the Newtonian medical theory of the period, whose strictly physiological concerns have been described as "psychiatry without mind,"[3] Dr. John Armstrong (1709–79) sought therapeutic effects when he published his four-part poem, *The Art of Preserving Health*, in 1744. The intellectual historian Peter Gay has observed that the Scientific Revolution "was a voyage into abstraction and specialization" that many Enlightenment figures managed to resist.[4] Indeed, by voicing his defiance of "the mathematical physic" characteristic of Newtonian medical theory, in a poetic style that was suited both to offering specific instruction and imaginative excursion, Armstrong's masterpiece—which remained hugely popular throughout a particularly innovative century—should now be recognized as a key literary example of that resistance.[5] This Introduction and indeed this book display Armstrong's debts to contemporary interest in the period's energetic rediscovery of Virgil's *Georgics*, a rediscovery of a text that, particularly during the years immediately following the death of Alexander Pope, encouraged young poets to develop their readers' associations between emotional experience and practical conduct.[6]

Armstrong skillfully integrates an innovative appreciation of his patient's feelings with wider respect for Virgil's classical model by placing the reader in the position of the honorable Roman farmer. He does this in ways that accord with David Fairer's recent discussion of "the georgic mode" in contemporary poetry: "the 'Nature' with which the Georgic poet works is the same ambiguous power

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[3] See Akihito Suzuki, "Psychiatry Without Mind in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of British Iatro-Mathematicians," *Archives internationales d'histoire de sciences* 48 (1998): 120–146. See also A. Suzuki, *Mind and Its Disease in Enlightenment British Medicine,* PhD diss. University College London, 1992; Roy Porter, "Barely Touching: A Social Perspective on Mind and Body" in *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. G. S. Rousseau (Berkeley: U of California P, 1990): 45–79. On social aspects of the clinical dimension, see Wayne Wild, *Medicine-By-Post in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Changing Rhetoric of Illness in Doctor-Patient Correspondence and Literature*, PhD diss. Brandeis U., 2001.

[4] See Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Science of Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1969) 128. On the dominance of Newtonian discourse in contemporary medical theory, see the following articles by Anita Guerrini: "Archibald Pitcairne and Newtonian Medicine," *Medical History* 31 (1987): 70–83; "James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian Physiology, 1690–1740," *Journal of the History of Biology* 18 (1985): 247–66; and "The Tory Newtonians: Gregory, Pitcairne, and their Circle," *Journal of British Studies* 25 (1986): 288–311. See also T. Brown, "From Mechanism to Vitalism in Eighteenth-Century English Physiology," *Journal of the History of Biology* 7 (1974): 179–216.

[5] For a recent study of the particular suitability of georgic poetry for popularizing contemporary scientific concepts, see Frans de Bruyn, "Reading Virgil's *Georgics* as a Scientific Text: The Eighteenth-Century Debate between Jethro Tull and Stephen Switzer," *ELH* 71 (2004): 661–89.

[6] For a recent survey of the prominence of georgic poetry among literary readers through the mid-eighteenth century, see Juan Christian Pellicer, "The Georgic," *The Blackwell Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (London: Blackwell, 2008) 403–16.

the workers have to confront, a changeable force which nurtures and tortures while it tracks the cycle of the seasons."[7] Further, by borrowing familiar rhetoric and structural principles from Galenic medicine throughout his poem, Armstrong retained a traditional view of nature as a force that both harms and heals. But his deliberate focus on volatile emotional states (or "passions,") opens up a new view of literary experience as a therapeutic force.

Armstrong's *Art of Preserving Health* adopts and then adjusts poetic evocations of powerful feelings, such as the vision of terror that Armstrong's close friend James Thomson provided in his great poem *Winter* (1726); this literary practice had provided a therapeutic harnessing of sublime imagery that tested current somatic theories of the mind.[8] Similar contemporary literary examples are significant because, together, they show that the *Art of Preserving Health* retains historical importance not only for its powerful depiction of the knowledgeable physician as a feeling patient, but also for the way it encouraged its considerable numbers of eighteenth-century readers to think critically about the emotional meaning and pedagogical significance of this poet's clinical depictions. This reflectiveness on real and imagined encounters between patients and physicians, this book suggests, is just the most evident way in which this poem signals the sympathetic abilities of its readers, which has seemed more characteristic of contemporary novels than didactic poetry.[9] *The Art of Preserving Health* has been neglected by later generations of readers, yet its characterization and reflectiveness was without precedent in both the medical and literary material of the early eighteenth century.[10] The first part of this Introduction will pave the way for a closer reading of the poem by charting Armstrong's earlier writing, medical training, and pioneering medico-poetic career, to show why this poem touches so tellingly on many important elements of professional, literary, and intellectual life in London and Edinburgh during the 1740s.

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[7] See D. Fairer, "Persistence, Adaptation, and Transformations in Pastoral and Georgic Poetry," in *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) 259–86. See also D. Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–89* (London: Longman, 2003) 79–101.

[8] Thomson involved Armstrong in *The Castle of Indolence*; he provided the final three stanzas of Canto One that personify Lethargy, Hydropsy, Hypochondria, and Apoplexy. See *Liberty, The Castle of Indolence, and Other Poems*, ed. J. Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1986) 197–8. For Armstrong's close friendship with Thomson and other London-based Scots, see Mary Jane W. Scott, *James Thomson: Anglo-Scot* (Athens, GA: U of Georgia P, 1988) 204–53.

[9] In this respect, my discussion of the objective treatment of the subjective narrator will be indebted to Gabrielle Starr, *Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004). Starr does not mention John Armstrong nor any aspect of medical discourse.

[10] For a suggestive discussion of reasons why so much Scottish poetry of this period remains neglected by readers and historians, see C. E. Andrews, "'Almost the Same, but Not Quite': English Poetry by Eighteenth-Century Scots," *The Eighteenth Century* 47 (2006): 59–79.

Despite the thriving prejudices against Scottish physicians who took up practice in London in the years following Scotland's political union with England (1707),[11] John Armstrong's innovative depiction of sympathy between ailing English patients and a wise Scottish physician and between a learned poet and receptive readers eventually won him a precious measure of patronage from the English medical establishment. Over the course of the next century, generations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers across Britain, Europe, and America celebrated the heightened and innovative display of emotional and physical sensibility in *The Art of Preserving Health*. As we will see in further detail, this poem's publication history, as well as its open debts to stylistic, conceptual, and professional controversies of the time, attest to its author's unique position in the mid-eighteenth century's transitional political, literary, and medical contexts.[12] Critical approaches to eighteenth-century literary culture make frequent reference to the coinage of "sensibility," a neurological term which was introduced by the Edinburgh physiologist Robert Whytt in 1751—yet its cultural influence was limited by bibliographical history, for Whytt's highly technical treatise addressed a very limited audience of specialists who did not call for a second edition until 1763.[13] Armstrong's medical training between 1728 and 1732 at the University

[11] See P. Langford, "South Britons' Reception of North Britons, 1707–1820," in T. Smout, ed. *Anglo-Scottish Relations, from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 143–69.

[12] With regard to medical theory and practice, William Bynum has observed that "just as the intellectual origins of the French Revolution are sometimes traced from 1749, many of the concerns and attitudes of the late Enlightenment doctors seem to find a resting place around this date": see W. F. Bynum, "Health, Disease, and Medical Care," *The Ferment of Knowledge*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 220.

[13] For suggestions that Whytt popularized the notion of sensibility beyond medical contexts, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1992); Geoffrey Sill, *The Cure of the Passions and the Origins of the English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993). Whytt coined this term to describe the actions of an immaterial "sentient principle" that directs purposeful but involuntary nervous reflexes: see *An Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals* (Edinburgh: Hamilton and Balfour, 1751). Whytt's definition sparked a spirited debate with Albrecht von Haller over the relative nature of nervous "irritability," which in Whytt's view was constituted by neurological reflex rather than through local nervous sensitivity. See Roger French, *Roger Whytt, the Soul, and Medicine* (London: Wellcome Trust, 1969); Armstrong refers to "irritable nerves" twice in his poem, but he uses the term in the more general sense—for nerves were understood by nonspecialists to include muscles, ligaments, and neurological tissue (see *APH* 3: 448; *APH* 4: 447). Whytt discussed the controversy with Haller in his *Physiological Essays* of 1761; Haller's side of the debate was not published in English until 1936. We should note that, as early as 1738, a regular contributor to Monro's *Medical Essays and Observations revised and Published by a Society in Edinburgh* showed that involuntary actions (later termed reflexes) cast mystery rather than certainty on the mechanical relationship between mental will and physical experience, calling for further experiment and discussion. See William Porterfield, "An Essay concerning the Motions of Our Eyes, Part II" *Medical Essays* 4 (1738): 124–293.

of Edinburgh coincided with Whytt's, and their shared course of study probably informed both men's shared view that the mind responds both to internal (emotional) and external (physical) sensations.[14] Literary and medical historians focus, sometimes exclusively, on the fashionable "nerve-doctor" George Cheyne when citing the scientific elements of sensibility's moral dimensions—and it is true that after Cheyne's death in 1743, one eulogist claimed that "his *System* has a peculiar Tendency to promote *Virtue* and *Religion*, to calm the Passions, refine the Mind, and purify the Heart."[15] But it is also important to note that despite the initial popularity of Cheyne's *Essay of Health and Long Life* (1724) and *The English Malady* (1733), the former was not reprinted between 1745 and 1787, nor the latter after 1735.[16] If we date "the age of sensibility" from the publication of Richardson's novel *Pamela* (1740) to the publication of Wordsworth and Coleridge's poems *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), then we should note that Cheyne's and Whytt's popularity among readers was quite muted throughout—keeping in mind that the social contacts of Samuel Richardson and Samuel Johnson, both of whom famously referred to Cheyne, were not representative of the wider reading public. Rather it was the conceptual program, humanitarian message, and unprecedented mode of cultural engagement achieved by Armstrong's *Art of Preserving Health* that allowed it to reach beyond the range of most if not all popular treatises on these subjects well into the nineteenth century, at which

[14] See Edinburgh University Library MSS DC.595.

[15] See *Dr. Cheyne's Account of Himself and of His Writings (*London: Wilford, 1744) 27. For major literary studies that focus on Cheyne, see Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction (*London: Methuen, 1986), John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988); C. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992). At a recent symposium celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum, the medical historian Andrew Scull provided a keynote address that surveyed Scottish contributions to British psychiatry, citing Cheyne as the only worthy example. See A. Scull, "The Peculiarities of the Scots? Scottish Influences on the Development of English Psychiatry, 1700–1980," unpublished paper, *The History of Medicine in Scotland Symposium*, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 10 October 2009.

[16] Although *The English Malady* called for six editions in its first two years, the 1735 edition was its last. On Cheyne's memoir of his fallen state before he underwent a religio-spiritual conversion, which he appended to this work, see Anita Guerrini, "Case History as Spiritual Autobiography: George Cheyne's "Case of the Author," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 19 (May 1995): 18–27. Cheyne's popular authority has waned well before he completed his *Essay on Regimen* (1740), for as Robert Schofield has shown, "he had to indemnify his publishers for losses suffered on the first edition": see *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970) 61. See also Henry Fielding's ridicule of Cheyne in his pamphlet, *The Tryal of Colley Cibber ... ... and the Arraignment of George Cheyne, Physician at Bath, for the Philosophical, Physical, and the Logical Heresies Uttered in his Last Book on Regimen* (London: n.p., 1740).

time the taste for didactic poetry met its fatal decline and the circulation of new discoveries turned the historical page.[17]

The Art of Preserving Health ranks among the most frequently reprinted books of the eighteenth century.[18] In 1747, within three years of its release, *The Art of Preserving Health* entered its third edition and eighth impression. In the mid-1760s, the poet laureate Thomas Warton translated 50 lines of it into Latin, with lengthy annotations on its classical allusions.[19] The "public favour" that continued to celebrate Armstrong's achievement was jealously noted with some bitterness by Thomas Chatterton as late as 1770, who associated the *Art* with the sensational and yet scandalous pan-European publication of the *Ossian* forgeries a few years earlier.[20] By the time the distinguished physician and editor John Aikin published his edition of the *Art* in 1795, with lengthy scholarly apparatus, the poem had called for more than 13 editions and 27 impressions in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and notably at Benjamin Franklin's shop in Philadelphia, where for some 20 years it was the only work of medicine or verse to carry his great American imprint.[21] The *Art* was celebrated on the Continent, where it was translated into

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[17] On this decline, see K. Heinzelman, "Roman Georgic in the Georgian Age," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33 (Summer 1991): 182–214. As Karina Williamson has noted, Thomas de Quincey considered didactic poetry an oxymoron. See K. Williamson, "West Indian Georgic," rev. of *The Poetics of Empire,* by John Gilmore, *Essays in Criticism* 73 (Winter 2000): 80–89.

[18] For a recent discussion of Armstrong's poem in the context of eighteenth-century georgic poetry, see David Fairer, "Persistence, Adaptations and Transformations in Pastoral and Georgic Poetry," J. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) 282–3. William J. Mahoney undertook a study of Armstrong's life and work, but did not live to complete it: see his fragmentary *George and John Armstrong of Castleton* (Edinburgh: Livingstone, 1954). Lewis Knapp's survey of Armstrong's friendships, especially with Tobias Smollett and John Wilkes, does not discuss his writings: see "Dr. John Armstrong, Littérateur, and Associate of Smollett, Thomson, Wilkes, and Other Celebrities," *PMLA* 59 (1944): 1019–58. *The Art of Preserving Health* has been noted as a historical curiosity in various medical journals. The first of these was Joseph Collins, "Literary Leanings of Eighteenth-Century Physicians," *Proceedings of the Charaka Club* 4 (1916): 27–44; for the most recent, see William B. Ober, "John Armstrong, M.D.," *New York State Journal of Medicine* 65 (1 Nov. 1965): 271–7.

[19] See Thomas Warton, "De Ratione Salutis Conservandae," *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Warton*, vol. 2, 2 vols (Oxford: the University Press, 1802) 273–6.

[20] See Chatterton's "Kew Gardens" (1770): "Alas! I was not born beyond the Tweed!/ To public favour I have no pretence,/ If public favour is the child of sense:/ To paraphrase on Home in Armstrong's rhymes,/ To decorate Fingal in sounding chimes,/ The self-sufficient Muse was never known,/ But shines in trifling dulness all her own" (388–94). See *The Complete Works of Thomas Chatterton*, ed. Donald S. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1971). Chatterton is ridiculing Armstrong's depiction of his childhood in the Scottish Borders; see *Art of Preserving Health* 3: 72–99.

[21] Through the mid-1740s, Franklin was establishing The Pennsylvania Hospital, which opened in 1751. Armstrong's didactic poem would have suited his taste as well as

German once, and into French and Italian twice.[22] On his German tour of 1822, Wordsworth recalled that the sublimity of the Danube had been suitably expressed a century earlier in Armstrong's juvenilia, indicating this major poet's familiarity even with Armstrong's collected ands rather mediocre verse—which by then had appeared in numerous editions.[23] The nineteenth-century essayist George Gilfillan wrote that "we well remember to have heard [the poet] Thomas Campbell reading [from *The Art of Preserving Health*] in the Common Room of Glasgow College with great enthusiasm, as he proposed it to the students as the subject of a prize translation into Latin verse." This must have been after 1826.[24]

In his lectures on rhetoric (1784), Hugh Blair had ranked Armstrong's *Art* with Pope's *Essay on Man* and Boileau's *Art of Poetry* as "of the highest species, ancient or modern."[25] In 1819, the publisher Thomas Campbell claimed that "*The Art of Preserving Health* is the most successful attempt, in our language, to incorporate material science with poetry."[26] Suggesting a reconciliation between Romanticism and didactic poetry, William Hazlitt included all two thousand lines of the poem in his *Select Poets* of 1825, and the American educator and medical reformer William

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his current interests, for as Walter Isaacson recently suggested, Franklin's philosophical outlook as "more practical than abstract": see *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003) 150. No other medical work was printed by Franklin until 1750; the next book of poems from his press was an ephemeral poem by Thomas Letchworth of 1766. See C. William Miller, *Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Printing, 1728–1766: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974).

[22] For the German translation, see *Die Kunst, die Gesundheit zu erhalten* (Zürich: Füeßly, 1788); the Italian edition, *Igea ovvero l'arte di conservar la salut* (Livorno: Masi, Tommaso, 1806), by the great translator of Milton, Lazzaro Papi, was his only English translation beyond the Milton canon. A second translation was composed by T. J. Mathias, *La salute o l'arte di conservarla poema in quattro canti* (Naples: Nobile, Agnello, 1824). The two French translations are *Fragment du Poème anglais intitulé «L'Art de conserver la santé»*, trans. A.-L. Marquis (Rouen: Baudry, 1818) and the complete *L'Art de conserver la santé*, trans. N. B. Monne (Paris: Goujon, 1827).

[23] See Wordsworth's *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*: "Before this quarter of the Black Forest was inhabited, the source of the Danube might have suggested some of those sublime images which Armstrong has so finely described." See "The Source of the Danube," *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, ed. E. De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, vol. 3 (Oxford: OUP, 1951) 170, 473. Armstrong wrote his *Imitations of Shakespeare*, to which Wordsworth refers, in 1726, when he was 15.

[24] See G. Gillfillan, Introduction, *The Poetical Works of Armstrong, Dyer, and Green* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1880), xxii. Gillfillan entered his second year at the University of Glasgow when the poet Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) became Rector: see *Oxford DNB*.

[25] See H. Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 1784, vol. 2 (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1993) 362.

[26] See *Specimens of the British Poets*, vol. 6 (London: John Murray, 1819) 345.

then characterized medical training elsewhere in Britain.[33] Edinburgh's flexible but rigorous curriculum, which the new faculty had imported from the famous medical school at Leiden, had swiftly elevated the quality of Edinburgh's medical training above and beyond its older rival schools at Cambridge and Oxford—doing so, in part, by teaching medicine as a practical skill and not as a theoretical subject.[34] Although obtaining clinical experience was compulsory at Edinburgh and attending lectures was not, the range of available professorial expertise at the new school enabled it to feature "the most extensive selection of medical lectures offered at any university in Britain, a source of pride to the faculty and convenience to the students."[35] Unlike at the other British universities, students at Edinburgh did not need to matriculate to take lectures but only to pay for those they wished to take—and in return the professors were encouraged to make their lectures as relevant as possible for the students. The submission of the M.D. dissertation at Edinburgh demonstrated intellectual mastery of a subject on which the candidate had developed clinical expertise, emphasizing the importance of graduating physicians with demonstrably practical and marketable skills.[36] And during the first part of the century, Edinburgh was the only British university to require medical students to treat patients as a precondition for graduating M.D.[37] The arrival in

[33] On the distinctively clinical elements of medical training at Edinburgh, see Christopher Lawrence, *Medicine as Culture: Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment*, PhD diss. University College London, 1984; John R. R. Christie, "The Origins and Development of the Scottish Scientific Community, 1680–1760," *History of Science* 7 (1974): 122–41; Andrew Cunningham, "Medicine to Calm the Mind: Boerhaave's Medical System, and Why It Was Adopted in Edinburgh," in *The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. A. Cunningham and Roger French (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 50–66. Gay emphasizes Boerhaave's "principled caution" in the midst of the contemporary "*esprit de système*" that characterized the medical adoption of Newtonian principles during the early eighteenth century: see Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 135.

[34] In several articles, Christopher Lawrence explains that "the medicine that was taught at the new school was virtually a copy of that expounded by Hermann Boerhaave at Leiden" ("Ornate Physicians" 154). See also Guenter B. Risse "Clinical Instruction in Hospitals: The Boerhaavian Tradition in Leyden, Edinburgh, Vienna, and Padua" *Clio Medica* 21 (1987–88) 1–19.

[35] See L. Rosner, *Medical Education in the Age of Improvement: Edinburgh Students and Apprentices, 1760–1826* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991) 47.

[36] See John D. Comrie, *History of Scottish Medicine to 1860* (London: Wellcome Historical Museum, 1927), 197.

[37] Oxford did not retain a professor of medicine until 1770, the more senior physicians appointed to lecture "were useless as teachers and seldom in Oxford," and thus students had to pay for private tuition from junior physicians outside the university. See L. S. Sutherland, "The Curriculum," *The History of the University of Oxford: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: OUP, 1986) 489; A. H. T. Robb-Smith, "Medical Education at Oxford and Cambridge Prior to 1850," *Evolution of Medical Teaching in Britain*, ed. F. Poynter (London: Pitman, 1966) 40. See also Tristram, note 30. According to the single study of eighteenth-century medical teaching at Cambridge, "the first half century of the professorship was a period barren in regard to professing or discovery. I can see no

the importance of refreshing the body with water in an apostrophe to the naiads, who by the mid-1740s had become familiar classical features in Augustan verse.[144] Like a mythological hero, Armstrong invoked the water-nymphs who then enable his digressive expression of sensory experience:

> Now come, ye Naiads, to the fountains lead;
> Now let me wander thro' your gelid reign.
> I burn to view th' enthusiastic wilds
> By mortal else untrod. I hear the din
> Of waters thund'ring o'er the ruin'd cliffs.
> With holy rev'rence I approach the rocks
> Whence glide the streams renown'd in ancient song. (2: 352–8)

This reverential and solitary encounter with imaginary classical figures is, for Armstrong, as instructive for his readers as it is conventional in classical poetry. This evocative encounter with nature links the poet's sensory imagery with the patient's corporeal sensibility, showing that Armstrong maintains only a cursory adherence to conventional medical theory. Rather than merely following Galen's rules concerning the non-naturals, readers of this poem learn to appreciate their own responses to the natural environment. For Armstrong, readers already possess the sensibility they require to preserve health, which is why his georgic is devoted to cultivating feeling through evocative imagery rather than teaching mere precepts that implies a fundamental numbness to feeling.

Like Virgil's narrator who is both a working farmer and a polished poet, Armstrong constructs and then breaks though this mythological guise, showing that he too is subject to the elements that he describes, indeed that his own thirst is animated by the psychological associations aroused by the poem's natural setting. Such combinations of physical and emotional feelings brings him within reach of a physiological sublime:

> What solemn twilight! What stupendous shades
> Enwrap these infant floods! Thro' every nerve
> A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
> Glides o'er my frame (2: 365–8)

By describing the glittering rivulet and the quality of light, the poet's vision reflects his delight in emotional and corporeal sensibility. Armstrong's practical intention, of course, is to encourage positive reactions to healthy impulses by communicating the very feelings associated with disease and healing. Twenty lines later, his poetic vision seems to enable physical touch, constituting a decidedly therapeutic event:

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[144] See John Byrom's burlesque on "Dryads, Naiads, Nymphs, and Fauns" (1757) in "Remarks on a Pamphlet," *Miscellaneous Poems*, vol. 2, 2 vols (Manchester: J. Harrop, 1773) 213.