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Romanticism, Volume 12, Number 1, 2006, pp. 15-25 (Article)

Published by Edinburgh University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/rom.2006.0004>

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In October 1821 the Poet Laureate served up an extremely odd dinner to his visiting friend and fellow 'Lake' poet:

Two or three weeks ago, calling at Calvert's, I learnt that Raisley C. had committed the great sin of shooting an owl. ... Wordsworth and his wife were here, and as there was no sin in eating the owl, I ordered it to be dressed and brought in, in the place of game that day at dinner. It was served up without the head, and a squat-looking fellow it was, about the size of a large wild pigeon but broader in proportion to its length. The meat was more like bad mutton than anything else.

Wordsworth, Southey reported, 'was not valiant enough to taste it', but 'Mrs W did'. 'If you ever have an owl dressed for dinner,' Southey advised his correspondent, 'you had better have it boiled, and smothered with onions, for it is not good roasted.'¹

The incident seems emblematic of the two poets' approach to food in their work: Wordsworth reticent, we might almost say inhibited, on such a topic, generally eschewing any but the most sparing references to food and eating, and then alluding to food in its simplest, uncooked, usually symbolic, forms; and Southey – Byron's 'mouthey' – deliberately searching out the odd and the grotesque, 'smothering' it with metaphorical sauce and

serving it up, with a slightly warped sense of humour, to a somewhat unwilling partaker.² Southey's most recent biographer has described Southey's 'almost Proustian sense of smell', contrasting it with the fact that 'Wordsworth ... could apparently smell and taste practically nothing'.³

Personal preferences and biological or biographical idiosyncracies are not enough to account for contrasting approaches to the subject of food and eating in the work of these – or any other – writers. This aspect of Romantic-period writing has already been informed by many studies that relate it to wider literary, ideological, political and cultural discourses. In terms, for example, of the change in the 'figurative function' of food in Romantic-period writing identified by Jocelyne Kolb, Wordsworth might be seen to come before, and Southey after, a 'poetic revolution' in the literary treatment of food.⁴ Kolb's paradigm might be used to align Wordsworth's approach to food with an older – eighteenth-century – tradition that largely abjures the inclusion of the 'low' subject of food and eating in works of high style. Southey might be identified with a nineteenth-century challenge to the literary rules through his frequent recourse to culinary topics in verse and other writing, both low and high. Other cultural and historical discourses of the period might also be used to place Wordsworth and Southey on

different 'sides'. Timothy Morton's discussion of Shelleyan vegetarianism predicates diet, the body and consumption – subjects on which Southey writes frequently and enthusiastically – as exactly the kind of 'highly charged political issues' that, according to the Romantic ideology of new historicism, Wordsworth seeks to exclude from his poetry.⁵ Morton also mentions 'Wordsworth's cavalier treatment of the non-human' in *The Excursion* in terms which would have dismayed Southey's (meat-eating but sympathetic) sensibility as the author of 'Lines on the Death of a Favourite Old Spaniel' (1797) and 'To a Dancing Bear' (1799).⁶

The attempt to minimize the role of personal preferences and idiosyncracies in aesthetic judgements was, moreover, a major philosophical project in and just before this period: as the neoclassical, Aristotelean hierarchy of the five senses was subjected to various efforts to redefine the relationship between the fine arts, aesthetics and the body. 'A smell which one man enjoys gives another a headache', Kant pointed out in the *Critique of Judgement* (1790), before going on to propose

the Idea of a *communal* sense, ie of a faculty of judgement, which in its reflection takes account (*a priori*) of the mode of representation of all other men in thought; in order *as it were* to compare its judgement with the collective Reason of humanity, and thus to escape the illusion arising from private conditions that could be so easily taken for objective, which would injuriously affect the judgement. This is done by comparing our judgement with the possible rather than the actual judgement of others, and by putting ourselves in the place of any other man, by abstracting the limitations which contingently attach to our own judgement.⁷

While Kant invokes 'the collective Reason of Humanity' in order to minimize the peculiarities of individual sense-responses in

judging art, Hegel deploys science to eliminate altogether three of the senses from any representation in art. Whereas sight and sound ostensibly occur at a distance from their object, taste, smell and touch actually consume the object being sensed:

the sensuous aspect of art only refers to the two *theoretical* senses of *sight* and *hearing*, while smell, taste, and feeling remain excluded from being sources of artistic enjoyment. For smell, taste and feeling have to do with matter as such, and with its immediate sensuous qualities; smell with material volatilization in air, taste with the material dissolution of substance, and feeling with warmth, coldness, smoothness, etc. On this account these senses cannot have to do with the objects of art, which are destined to maintain themselves in their actual independent existence, and admit of no purely sensuous relation.⁸

For Coleridge, too, the eye and ear 'alone are true organs of sense, their sensations in a healthy or uninjured state being too faint to be noticed by the mind'. The 'lower senses' – touch or feeling, smell, and taste – are separated from these and have their own hierarchy:

The smell is less sensual and more sentient than mere feeling, the taste than the smell, and the eye than the ear; but between the ear and the taste exists a chasm or break, which divides the beautiful and the elements of beauty from the merely agreeable.⁹

This hierarchy of the senses was a well-known topos, which writers such as Southey could employ to guide the expectations of their readers. In Book 6 of *Thalaba the Destroyer*, the eponymous hero is lured into the secluded 'Earthly Paradise' of Aloadin and subjected to a trial in which the ekphrastic presentation of selected objects tests his ability to resist the allurements of the senses one after another. Once Thalaba has

passively received
The mingled joy which flow'd on every
sense,
(*Thalaba The Destroyer*, VI, stanza 20,
Southey's Poetical Works, p. 265)¹⁰

Southey's readers would have been alerted to expect a graded sequence of intensely sensuous evocations, relating to the five senses in 'descending' order. These increasingly confirm what readers have already been led to suspect: that this is a false paradise, modelled (as the epigraph indicates) on Spenser's Bower of Bliss, and designed to introduce the possibility (which readers also know will not actually come about) of diverting the hero from his solemn quest.

Thalaba is subjected to temptations of the eye which (like those in 'Kubla Khan') draw some of their inspiration from *Purchas His Pilgrimage*:

Where'er his eye could reach,
Fair structures, rainbow-hued, arose;
And rich pavilions through the opening
woods
Gleam'd from their waving curtains sunny
gold,
(VI, 20. *SPW*, p. 265)

His ears are then assailed, and afterwards, his sense of smell:

And oh! what odours the voluptuous
vale
Scatters from jasmine bowers,
From yon rose wilderness,
From clustr'd henna and from orange groves.
(VI, 22. *SPW*, p. 266)

In stanza 24 Thalaba enters a banquet room, where he is offered (and as a good Muslim refuses) wine, but partakes of 'odorous fruits' which seem to be predecessors of some Keatsian feast:

For all rich fruits were there;
Water-melons rough of rind,
Whose pulp the thirsty lip

Dissolv'd into a draught;
Pistachios from the heavy-cluster'd trees
Of Malavert, or Haleb's fertile soil;
And Casbin's luscious grapes of amber hue
(VI, 25. *SPW*, p. 267)

Touch is the last, most sensual, pleasure which Thalaba must resist. Southey again anticipates Keats (specifically, in the banquet scene of *Eve of St Agnes*) by using synaesthesia to both evoke and evade direct reference to the erotic appeal of touch. Instead the eye and the mouth do duty for the hand, tacitly anticipating tactile pleasures:

Anon a troop of females form'd the dance, ...
Transparent garments to the greedy eye
Exposed their harlot limbs,
Which moved, in every wanton gesture
skill'd.
(VI, 26. *SPW*, p. 268)

The seeing/eating/touching switch is further intensified as 'With earnest eyes the banqueters / Fed on the sight impure' (stanza 27). In the end it is only by abjuring assaults on all of his senses – by becoming 'Unhearing, or unheeding' – that Thalaba is able to escape from these voluptuous allurements. They and the Paradise of Irem at the beginning of the poem – for whose building 'The ruin of the royal voice / Found its way every-where' (I, 32, *SPW*, p. 221) – appear to make reference to the untimely extravagance of the Prince of Wales's Pavilion and his irregular domestic establishment at Brighton.¹¹

By contrast, Southey's readers would have been able instantly to gauge the honesty and integrity of the poem's protagonists by their unornamented taste in food:

They brought the Traveller rice,
With no false colours tinged to tempt the
eye,
But white as the new-fallen snow,
When never yet the sullyng Sun
Hath seen its purity,

Nor the warm zephyr touch'd and tainted it.
(II, 33. *SPW*, p. 229)

Food is also used in this poem to present the model of a loving and benevolent domesticity, and Southey's 'Hymn to the Penates' (1796) reminds us that the gods of the store-cupboard are by extension the deities of the home. The central family is limited to a microcosm, consisting (both here and in Southey's other oriental romance, *The Curse of Kehama*, 1810) only of a widowed father, his daughter and a youth occupying the position of both (adopted) brother and lover to the daughter. The domestic setting is likewise reduced to its core: a few simple belongings, a tent and a hearth. This nomadic, self-sufficient small family has been read as reflecting Southey's yearning for home during his own wandering youth, but it also encapsulates the virtues of the pre-commercial and pre-luxurious stage of societal development postulated in many eighteenth-century anthropological texts. Similarly, their religious observance has distinctly primitivist, anti-ecclesiastical and naturalistic overtones:

Their Father is their Priest,
The Stars of Heaven their point of prayer,
And the blue Firmament
The glorious Temple, where they feel
The present Deity.
(III, 22. *SPW*, p. 236)

This is a Protestant Islam, spare and abstemious, in contrast to the gluttonous Roman Catholicism that Southey deplored: 'I am never weary of repeating that faith is an appetite of the mind: our establishment starves it, the Catholics gorge it even to surfeiting and sickness'.¹² In these religious presentations Southey anticipates Byron, who similarly primes us (in *Don Juan*, III, 481–578) to expect disaster from Haidée's elaborate oriental feast for Juan, and for whom Roman Catholicism also held a half-horrifying gustatory fascination.¹³

Preparing food in Thalaba's family is women's work, although men may participate in related activities:

by the hearth
The Damsel shakes the coffee-grains,
That with warm fragrance fill the tent;
And while, with dexterous fingers, Thalaba
Shapes the green basket.
(III, 18. *SPW*, p. 235)

Fathers stand in for male readers in the pleasure they gain from observing:

He watch'd her nimble fingers spread
the woof,
Or, at the hand-mill, when she knelt and
toil'd,
Toss'd the thin cake on spreading palm,
Or fix'd it on the glowing oven's side
With bare wet arm, and safe dexterity.¹⁴
(III, 21. *SPW*, p. 236)

As in all Southey's long romance poems and his drama *Joan of Arc*, the footnotes are voluminous and on occasion almost overwhelm the verse. Southey's description of the notes to *Kehama* as 'copious, & sufficiently dull: I give them as specimens of the ore, that the skill of the refiner may be understood' is disingenuous, however, as the notes also provide opportunities for non-generic material to be included in the work and for distinctly contrasting voices to be heard.¹⁵ An early note to *Thalaba* even risks undermining the whole orientalist project of the poem:

A waste of ornament and labour
characterizes all the works of the
Orientalists. I have seen illuminated Persian
manuscripts that must each have been the
toil of many years, every page painted, not
with representations of life and manners, but
usually like the curves and lines of a Turkey
carpet, conveying no idea whatever, as
absurd to the eye as nonsense-verses are to
the ear. The little of their literature that has

reached us is equally worthless. (SPW, p. 215, note 3)

Southey's critique of what he construes to be empty oriental consumerism can be read as a classic case of European displacement of its own obsessions onto an alien society. Through his alter-ego Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, in *Letters from England* (p. 94), Southey reverses the point of view in order to observe English excess in the same light:

It is recorded of some old Eastern tyrant, that he offered a reward for the discovery of a new pleasure; – in like manner this nation [England] offers a perpetual reward to those who will discover new wants for them, in the readiness wherewith they purchase any thing, if the seller will but assure them it is exceedingly convenient.

In *Thalaba* the poet manages, moreover, to 'have his cake and eat it' by, as we have seen, including passages describing the most sumptuous oriental ornament in the verse under the guise of their being temptations or examples of forbidden luxury, while the notes enable him to maintain a pose of northern reserve and rectitude.

The footnotes also provide ample opportunities to express a taste for the physically odd, Gothic and grotesque. Thus *Thalaba* includes several pages of notes about vampires (of the pre-Byronic, folkloric type), who are said to be 'so full of blood, that it runs out at all the passages of their bodies, and even at their very pores' (SPW, p. 277). The notes to Book II of *Kehama* feature 'the *Jiggerkhar* (or liver-eater)' which

steal[s] away the liver of another by looks and incantations [or] ... by looking at a person, ... deprives him of his senses, and then steals from him something resembling the seed of a pomegranate, which he hides in the calf of his leg. The *Jiggerkhar* throws on the fire the grain before described, which

thereupon spreads to the size of a dish, and he distributes it amongst his fellows, to be eaten: which ceremony concludes the life of the fascinated person. (SPW, p. 587).

The verse narrative of *Kehama*, too, is generally more ferocious in tone than *Thalaba*, in keeping with Southey's views of its subject matter: 'the religion of the Hindoos ... of all false religions is the most monstrous in its fables, and the most fatal in its effects' (*Original Preface*, SPW, p. 548). Food here becomes a product – destined for wild beasts, not human beings – of the tyranny of the Rajah Kehama (a thinly-disguised portrait of Napoleon):

The steam of slaughter from that place of blood

Spread o'er the tainted sky.

Vultures, for whom the Rajah's tyranny
So oft had furnish'd food, from far and nigh

Sped to the lure: aloft with joyful cry,
Wheeling around, they hover'd over head;
Or, on the temple perch'd, with greedy eye,
Impatient watch'd the dead.

Far off the tigers, in the inmost wood,
Heard the death shriek, and snuff'd the scent
of blood;

They rose, and through the covert went their
way,

Couch'd at the forest edge, and waited for
their prey.

(IX, 1. SPW, p. 575)

Human consumption – in the form of drinking rather than eating – turns out to be symbolically crucial to the resolution of the plot of this poem, when Kehama, greedy for immortality, snatches up the 'Amreeta-cup':

He did not know the holy mystery
Of that divinest cup, that as the lips
Which touch it, even such is its quality,
Good or malignant: Madman! and he thinks

The blessed prize is won, and joyfully he
drinks.

...

The dreadful liquor works the will of Fate.
Immortal he would be,

Immortal he is made; but through his veins
Torture at once and immortality,

A stream of poison doth the Amreeta run.
(XXIV, 17–18. *SPW*, pp. 626–7)

Touch here is the catalyst of taste, and whereas Kehama's consumption of the Amreeta dooms him to eternal torture, the same cup bestows on the heroine Kailyl (who begins the poem as a peasant-girl) a metamorphosis into a higher being, and everlasting bliss with her winged lover.

The difference between colonial attitudes to the middle- and far East and to the Americas is reflected in the treatment of food in *Madoc*, published between *Thalaba* and *Kehama* in 1805. In the two orientalist romances colonialism is confined to the commentary (especially in the footnotes). In *Madoc*, however, the colonial project is enacted in the narrative itself, through the voyages to America of a twelfth-century Welsh prince whose settlement there to some extent fantasizes Southey and Coleridge's 1790s Pantisocracy project.¹⁶ *Madoc* not only encounters strange food and eating practices (notably, Aztec cannibalism) among the American Indians, but he also introduces European habits of consumption to the natives alongside his conversion of them to Christianity.¹⁷ A classic colonial scene involves a 'weak' and 'evil' native succumbing to the effects of the mead or metheglin provided by the European settlers (*Madoc in Aztlan*, IV, *SPW*, pp. 364–7). Despite *Madoc*'s warnings when he first offers it to the Hoamen Indians, the 'old beloved beverage' renders the native prince successively greedy, lustful, boastful, ineffectually threatening and finally comatose. The use of alcohol – in Southey's narrative

supposedly unknown to the Indians before the arrival of the Europeans – here emphasizes the superior temperance, control and maturity of the European mental and physical constitution.

As Southey's Europeans are more able than his Indians to regulate what they take in, so too his Indians are less able to control what they let out. Southey displays considerable interest not only in the disastrous moral effects of cannibalism but also (through the notes) in its bizarre physical effects, when the Aztlán warriors before battle are given 'the ablution of the Stone of Sacrifice' as a 'holy beverage' from which they will

Imbibe diviner valour, strength of arm
Not to be wearied, hope of victory,
And certain faith of endless joy in Heaven.
(*Madoc in Aztlan*, XV, 96–8. *SPW*, p. 392)

The footnote describes how the fierce American Indian Natchez warriors took 'an emetic, composed of a root boiled in water' before battle. 'The ceremony was to swallow it at one draught, and then discharge it again with loud eructations and efforts as might be heard at a great distance'. The Rabelaisian tone of the note (quoting from *Heriot's History of Canada*) undercuts the psalmic grandeur of the verse, setting up the Aztec warriors for the fall from dignity that duly follows.

In all three of his romances set in non-European contexts Southey deploys food and eating as a way of highlighting the alien setting, and of exploring and discussing different aspects of foreignness. Perhaps because of its contentiousness and its cultural richness as a topic, the effect of contrasting voices – sometimes contradicting each other and adopting different moral, cultural and political stances and standards of taste – is particularly marked when food and eating are the subject. Surprisingly, this argumentative effect and apparently deliberate lack of authorial direction is also evident in many of Southey's much shorter poems, where the

smaller scale might have been expected to minimize the scope for such variability. Morton completes his reading of Southey's 'Poems Concerning the Slave-Trade' (mainly sonnets, written in the 1790s) by pointing out that it is not just over time (as Hazlitt, Byron and others alleged) that Southey's work changed in voice, focus and political persona – but even *within* these individual poems themselves.¹⁸ This effect of uncertainty, slippage, or deliberate contrariness is equally characteristic of the many other short poems where – as in the slave-trade poems – food and eating take an important role.

Thus Southey's best-known 'food' poem – 'Gooseberry-pie, A Pindaric Ode' (1799) – compares gooseberries not only in classical terms to 'the gold-fruit-bearing tree / The glory of that old Hesperian grove' (*SPW*, pp. 125, 44-5), but also in disconcertingly carnivorous ones to 'the blood glutinous and fat of verdant hue' (line 5) of the turtle, used to make turtle soup. Not unexpectedly, in the slave-trade context, the sugar for the pie evokes 'Gambia's arid side' where 'The Vulture's feet are scal'd with blood, / And Beelzebub beholds with pride, / His darling planter brood' (37–40). The suffering of the slaves seems to be undercut and diminished, however, by the equal or greater attention given to the imagined sufferings of an inanimate object – the brook – which with 'loud and agonizing groan / That makes its anguish known' is 'tortured by the Tyrant Lord of Meal' and 'broken on the Wheel' (26-9). And in this poem the real and metaphorical anguish, sugar, fruit and blood is all served up within a decorously Pindaric mock-heroic crust, which opens with an invocation to the Muse and closes with a polite exchange of compliments between the poet and the cook.¹⁹

'Ode to a Pig while his Nose was Boring' (1799) satirizes the arguments used to support the slave-trade, addressing the pig in the same terms that a slave might be apostrophized by

a slave-trader anxious to justify the exchange from African forest to Caribbean plantation as that from a 'savage' to a 'civilized' existence:

The social pig resigns his natural rights
When first with man he covenants to live;
He barter them for safer styed delights,
For grains and wash, which man alone can
give. ...

Go to the forest, Piggy, and deplore
The miserable lot of savage swine!
See how young pigs fly from the great boar,
And see how coarse and scantily they
dine! ...

And when, at last, the death-wound yawning
wide,
Fainter and fainter grows the expiring cry,
Is there no grateful joy, no loyal pride,
To think that for your master's good you
die?²⁰

The plight of cruelly treated animals was often identified with that of slaves and other oppressed human groups in writing of this period.²¹ But whereas, for example, Cowper equates slaves with lambs, and Barbauld and Burns compare mice with the labouring poor, Southey upsets the delicate balance of sympathy by introducing a much less picturesque and sentimental animal, and by forcing us to read 'slave' for 'pig' and vice-versa.²² If slaves should not suffer to gratify a privileged appetite, this even-handed treatment seems to ask, should animals be exploited for this purpose either? Southey manages to combine a genuine sympathetic sensibility to animals with a sharp satiric humour. In 'To a Spider' (1798) and 'The Filbert' (1799) we are invited to extend our sympathies to creatures still 'lower' than the pig by a poet who closely identifies himself with the spider – spinning its bowels as the poet spins his brains to earn his living – or who hopes to be metamorphosed into a maggot, 'enkernell'd' in its nut away from wars, invasions, plots, Kings, 'Jacobines'

and tax-commissioners, 'And in the middle of such exquisite food / To live luxurious' (*SPW*, pp. 127, 163, lines 33, 38–9).

In another pig poem the authorial viewpoint appears initially to be clearer, since the argument is divided between the rustic Jacob, whose nose is 'Turn'd up in scornful curve at yonder pig' (*SPW*, p. 162, line 2), and the more cultured narrator, who pleads the animal's cause, pointing out that it is

a democratic beast,
[Who] knows that his unmerciful drivers
seek
Their profit, and not his. He hath not learnt
That pigs were made for man, – born to be
brawn'd
And baconized; that he must please to give
Just what his gracious masters please to take.
(*'The Pig, a Colloquial Poem'*,
SPW, p. 162, lines 15–20)

Just when the narrator seems to be winning the argument, however, the breeze rises and blows his sentimental anthropomorphism away:

O'er yon blossom'd field
Of beans it came, and thoughts of bacon rise.
(66–7)

The relationship between pigs and bacon seems, indeed, to be one which makes the poet positively relish his own moral helplessness, especially after he has completed his dinner, in yet another pig poem which appears to borrow not only from eighteenth-century sentimental animal elegies but also from satires of them such as Cowper's 'To the Immortal Memory of the Halybutt on which I dined this day' (1784):

And I have din'd! again have made my
meal –
Yes, and I found the Eggs and Bacon
sweet;
Alas! that men who eat should finely feel –
Alas, that men who finely feel should
eat! ...

But wherefore should I muse on thoughts
like these?

Why wake the wounds of feeling thus
unwise? –

Nay, nay, ye Eggs and Bacon, be at peace,
Nor in my conscience, nor my stomach,
rise.

(*'Elegy upon Eggs and Bacon'*, 1799,
CRSMP, pp. 169–71. 1–4, 17–20)

Southey's only half-hearted desire here to reconcile the demands of his conscience and his stomach recalls Coleridge's endorsement of Wordsworth's complaint about a poet who 'writes *too much at his ease*'.²³ The difference and distance between Southey's literary projects and purposes and those of his fellow 'Lakers' is, indeed, one of the features that emerges most clearly from a study of Southey's approaches to food and eating – as is an appreciation of the extent to which his work influenced that of the younger Romantic generation in this respect.²⁴ Kolb places Byron in opposition to Southey in her study of eating in *Don Juan*, but actually it is the things that they share and that Byron learnt from Southey that are striking. The focus on cannibalism as a site of civilized as well as savage anxiety, the symbolic contrasting of luxurious and disciplined food habits and, above all, the use of footnotes and digressions to create opportunities for an evasion of coherence and a *mobilité* in the voices discussing these topics: all these are in Southey's work before they appear in Byron's. Southey precedes Shelley in introducing anxieties about meat-eating and 'vegetarian' discourse to his verse, alongside radical politics and a critique of slavery and consumerism based on what Morton calls *macellogia* – a discourse about the shambles (a literal as well as metaphorical concern for Southey: see footnote 6). Southey's sensuous evocations of food in oriental and mediaeval settings, and his deployment of food and eating as a means of advancing a narrative, setting a

mood and handling erotic topics are clearly precursors of the spicy delights of Keats's *Eve of St Agnes* and even of 'To Autumn', while Espriella/Southey's knowing descriptions of fashionable London shopping in *Letters from England* indicate his grasp of exactly the consumptive and Cockney milieu in which Keats was operating.²⁵

Southey's 1824 description of his Shandean novelistic work-in-progress *The Doctor* shows him metaphorically poised between the Lakers and the later generation:

Such a variety of ingredients I think never before entered into any book which had a thread of continuity running through it. I promise you there is as much sense as nonsense there. It is very much like a trifle, where you have good whipt cream at the top, sweetmeats below, and a good solid foundation of cake well steeped in ratafia. You will find a liberal expenditure of long hoarded stores, such as the reading of few men could supply; satire and speculation; truths, some of which might besem the bench or the pulpit, and others that require the sanction of the cap and bells for their introduction. And withal a narrative interspersed with interludes of every kind; yet still continuous upon a plan of its own, varying from grave to gay; and taking as wild and yet as natural a course as one of our mountain streams. (*LCRS*, 5. 190)

While the mountain stream, with its 'wild' but 'natural' course, is clearly a 'Lake' trope, the man- (or woman-) made 'trifle', put together out of already-composed and processed foods (whipt' and 'steeped') is from another, bourgeois and self-ironizing environment altogether. This, along with a roasted owl served in place of game, is the world that Southey – though not Wordsworth – was 'valiant enough' to put to the proof of taste. ■

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NOTES

1. *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. by Charles Cuthbert Southey, 6 vols (London: Longmans, 1850), V, p. 98 (hereafter referred to as *LCRS*). Southey's jokes also included having rats served at table and trying to persuade his family to eat kittens. Perhaps not surprisingly, his letters include several references to the suffering of his bowels or 'poor trulibubs': see Mark Storey, *Robert Southey: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 47 (hereafter referred to as *RSL*).

2. *Don Juan*, canto I, l. 1636. Hazlitt commented that: 'in Mr Wordsworth there is a total disunion and divorce of the faculties of the mind from those of the body. ... From the Lyrical Ballads, it does not appear that men eat or drink, marry or are given in marriage.' William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, ed. by his son. Third edition (New York: Russell, 1841) reproduced and reissued (New York: Russell, 1968), p. 257.

3. *RSL*, p. 3. Southey claimed mnemonic pre-eminence for the sense of smell: 'I am no botanist; but, like you, my earliest and deepest recollections are connected with flowers, and they always carry me back to other days. Perhaps this is because they are the only things which affect our senses in precisely the same manner as they did in childhood. The sweetness of the violet is always the same, and when you rifle a rose, and drink as it were its fragrance, the refreshment is the same to the old man as to the boy. We see with different eyes in proportion as we learn to discriminate, and, therefore, this effect is not so certainly produced by visual objects. Sounds recall the past in the same manner, but do not bring with them individual scenes, like the cowslip-field or the bank of violets, or the corner of the garden to which we have transplanted field flowers.' *LCRS*, III, p. 313.

4. Jocelyne Kolb, *The Ambiguity of Taste: Freedom and Food in European Romanticism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

5. Timothy Morton, *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

6. Writing as if from a Spanish point of view, Southey makes Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella deplore the cruelty of English butchers and cooks. 'Cattle are slaughtered with the clumsiest barbarity: the butcher hammers away at the forehead of the beast; blow after blow raises a swelling which renders the following blows ineffectual, and the butchery is completed by cutting the throat. ... You see women in the streets

skinning eels while the creature writhes on the fork. ... Lobsters and crabs are boiled alive, and sometimes roasted! and carp, having been scaled and gutted, will sometimes leap out of the stew-pan.' 'The principle of abstaining from animal food is not in itself either culpable or ridiculous, if decently discussed,' Espriella observes. 'It is to be wished the Pythagoreans in England were numerous or philosophical enough to carry on a series of experiments upon this subject, and upon the physical effects of their system.' *Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*, ed. by Jack Simmons (London: Cresset Press, 1951, hereafter referred to as *LFE*), pp. 88–9 and p. 402.

7. *Kant's Critique of Judgement*, trans. by J.H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 185.

8. G.W.F. Hegel, *On Art, Religion, and the History of Philosophy: Introductory Lectures*, ed. by J. Glenn Gray (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p. 67.

9. 'On the Principles of Genial Criticism', in *Art in Theory, 1648–1815: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 953–7 (p. 956).

10. *Thalaba the Destroyer* was published in 1801. This paper was written before the publication of *Robert Southey: Poetical Works 1793–1810*, ed. by Lynda Pratt, Tim Fulford and Daniel Roberts, The Pickering Masters, 5 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, June 2004). My quotations are taken from *Southey's Poetical Works, Complete in One Volume* (London: Longman, 1845), subsequently referred to as *SPW*. The centring of the lineation here and in quotations from *The Curse of Kehama* follows Southey's practice in the 1837–8 edition that was the last he oversaw himself (*The Poetical Works of Robert Southey, Collected by Himself, in ten volumes* (London: Longman, 1837–8)), hereafter referred to as *PWRS*. The centering serves to draw attention to a feature of the versification which Southey noted with pride in the preface to the fourth edition of *Thalaba*: 'I felt that while it ["this rhythm"] gave the poet a wider range of expression, it satisfied the ear of the reader. It were easy to make a parade of learning by enumerating the various feet which it admits: it is only needful to observe that no two lines are employed in *sequence* which can be read into one ... the duller reader cannot distort it into discord.' *SPW*, p. 213. *Kehama* uses rhyme whereas *Thalaba* does not.

11. See E.A. Smith's description of the Prince's activities in the late 1790s, in *George IV* (New Haven: Yale, 1999), p. 89: 'Wartime inflation and ever-increasing expenses affected everyone's housekeeping.

... Nevertheless, his formidable debts did not prevent the Prince from pressing ahead with the furnishing of the Pavilion. Furniture was bought in Paris, and two "elegant and light lustres designed in the Chinese style" with a pagoda in the centre and basket ornaments at the bottom, "the whole richly cut and gilt", cost over £200.'

12. Letter to Tom Southey, 23 January 1811, quoted in *RSL*, p. 206.

13. In March 1822 Byron wrote to Thomas Moore (who was a Roman Catholic): 'those who swallow their Deity, really and truly, in transubstantiation, can hardly find anything else otherwise than easy of digestion'. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. by Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (London: John Murray, 1973–94), 9, p. 123.

14. A footnote (*SPW*, p. 236. note 5) describes Arab women making flat bread which they bake by moistening one side with water, wetting a hand and arm with water, and flipping the bread dextrously so that it sticks on to the side of a hot oven. "This mode, let me add, does not require half the fuel that is made use of in Europe," Southey quotes approvingly.

15. Letter to Walter Savage Landor, 27 September 1809, quoted in *RSL*, p. 201.

16. Lynda Pratt has demonstrated that *Madoc* underwent huge revisions and changes of emphasis as it evolved between Southey's original conception in 1789, when he was still at school, and its eventual publication in 1805. See 'Revising the National Epic: Coleridge, Southey and *Madoc*', in *Romanticism*, vol. 2.2, 1996, pp. 149–63.

17. This aspect of *Madoc* has been fully explored by Peter J. Kitson in 'Romantic Displacements: Representing Cannibalism', in *Placing and Displacing Romanticism*, ed. by Peter J. Kitson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 204–25. Kitson shows cannibalism to have been a trope 'used to shore up a white Christian subjectivity against the anxieties that haunted the Romantic self, during a period when extreme hunger and starvation made the prospect of "white cannibalism" a very real possibility, or, at least, a very palpable fear' (p. 205).

18. "I", "you" and "them" seem to be shifting their places between rectitude and rebelliousness, bigotry and sympathy, the object of colonial reform and the subject of revolution. Southey's sonnets are ostensibly didactic texts that turn out to be radically unstable and plural in meaning. ... My reading of his anti-slavery writing is that he was interestingly less in control of his meanings than Hazlitt asserts.' Timothy Morton,

The Poetics of Spice: Romantic Consumerism and the Exotic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 202–4.

19. Byron's reference to Southey and his fellow 'Lakers' as 'A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye / Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye"' in the Dedication to *Don Juan* (ll. 7–8) may refer to this well-known poem of Southey's, as well as to Southey's predecessor as Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye.

20. *The Contributions of Robert Southey to the Morning Post*, ed. by Kenneth Curry (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1984, hereafter referred to as *CRSMP*), p. 159. ll. 17–20, 29–32, 41–4.

21. See a fuller discussion of the identification of the causes of animals and slaves in my *Kindred Brutes; Animals in Romantic-Period Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 38–47.

22. Cowper's 'Epigram on the Slave Trade' was published in the *Northampton Mercury* in 1792. Barbauld's 'The Mouse's Petition to Doctor Priestley' dates from 1773, and Burns's 'To a Mouse' from 1785.

23. Letter to Joseph Cottle, early April 1791, in *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by E.L. Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–71), 1, p. 320.

24. Southey wrote of himself and Wordsworth that 'certainly there were no poets in whose productions, the difference not being between good and bad, less resemblance could be found'. Preface to the third volume of *PWRS* (quoted here from *SPW*, p. x).

25. See for example, *LFE*, p. 69: 'In the Spring, when all persons of distinction are in Town, the usual morning employment of the ladies is to go a-shopping, as it is called; that is, to see curious exhibitions. This they do without actually wanting to purchase any thing, and they spend their money or not, according to the temptations which are held out to gratify and amuse. Now female shopkeepers, it is said, have not enough patience to indulge this idle and fastidious curiosity; whereas young men are more assiduous, more engaging, and not at all querulous about their loss of time.

'It must be confessed, that these exhibitions are very entertaining, nor is there any thing wanting to set them off to the greatest advantage. Many of the windows are even glazed with large panes of plate glass, at a great expense.'